Interview with Arnold Schifferdecker

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

ARNOLD SCHIFFERDECKER

Interviewed by: C. Edward Dillery

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Q: Today is May 14, 1996 and we are interviewing Arnold Schifferdecker. The interviewer is Edward Dillery. Arnie, why don't we start out by asking you a little bit about your background, where you were born and where you came from?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I'm from Missouri, a small farming community called Norborne along the Missouri River in western Missouri not far from Independence where one of my heroes, Harry Truman, grew up. I went to the University of Missouri at Columbia and had a dual major in journalism and in history. It was in the study of diplomatic history that I got interested in the Foreign Service.

Q: What about your family background? Where did your folks come from?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, they are all of German origin—Lutheran Protestant. My great grandfather immigrated from Germany to Pennsylvania and then onward to Illinois and eventually to Missouri where land was cheaper. I have a family of five siblings and none of them hardly left the mid West, except myself. I guess I was the black sheep.

Q: So that brings us to what caused you to come into the Foreign Service. How did you get interested?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, as I mentioned, in studying history, especially diplomatic history of the United States as one of my elective courses in my history major, I became very interested in the process of diplomacy and learned a little bit about the Foreign Service just from reading and knowing a little bit about what the diplomatic corps of the US was. After I graduated I entered the Navy and pointed myself toward taking the Foreign Service exam, which I was able to pass successfully three years after graduation and prior to leaving the Navy.

Q: How long were you in the Navy?

SCHIFFERDECKER: A total of six years. I was in Naval Air in a squadron that deployed to the Far East, the Pacific, on an aircraft carrier, the USS Ranger, which had many port calls in Japan, where I understand you also served.

Q: Right. It might have even been at that time. What years were you there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We had deployments from our home port of San Francisco to the Far East in 1960 and 1961. I believe that did coincide with your time.

Q: Right, that is exactly right. I left Japan in August, 1961. So you took the exam and came in in 1964. What are your impressions about the beginning days in the Foreign Service? Any thoughts on the training or what you found when you got here, etc.?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was very elated having made it through the exam process into the Foreign Service. There was a bit of a hiring freeze during the time I was waiting on the register, but they found enough money in 1964 before the end of the fiscal year to have an extra class in September and I got my call in July, 1964. I entered into the A-100 training course which was then in the infamous garage annex at Arlington Towers where many Foreign Services officers were trained initially. I was very impressed with the orientation training we received. I didn't come in with a language and was given French, a world language, to hopefully get off language probation. But, unfortunately, they assigned me,

my first posting as a junior officer, to Istanbul, although it was fortunate in one regard, I really enjoyed Turkey and I went back to the country again much later. But, I couldn't use my French and I didn't get off probation until later with a little bit of extra effort on my part using my French to achieve a tested 3/3 rating.

Q: It sounds like me. What was the oral examination like?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The oral was about an hour and a half of grilling. It was not the long, complex oral review that you might have gone through, this was in 1963. It was a panel of Foreign Service, a couple of ambassadors, a civil servant from the Office of Personnel Management, someone from another agency and someone from the private sector.

Q: And that was here in Washington?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That was in Washington at what is now the Office of Personnel Management where the Board of Examiners resided for a brief period of time.

Q: Did you finance your own way out here?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Fortunately I was in Washington because I was finishing my tour of duty in the Navy in the Pentagon as an information officer. As I mentioned I had studied both journalism and history and I was pegged by the Navy when I came off sea duty to be a flack for the Pentagon during McNamara's time. It was a very interesting time, by the way, with the “Whiz Kids” in the Pentagon and the beginnings of our engagement in Southeast Asia..

Q: In the oral examination what was the tenor of it? I remember when I did it, it was more designed to see how you would react under pressure.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, I can remember the first couple of questions. They wanted to elicit a fairly extensive answer about the objectives and aims of the Alliance for Progress, which was then being promoted for Latin America by President Kennedy. Fortunately,

I was au courant on that one. They asked me some factual questions, somewhat trivial pursuit in nature and I remember getting most of those except one, I couldn't identify the strait between the North Sea and the Baltic which is Kattegat; I thought for sure I had failed then and there.

Q: What was your family status when you came in?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was married without children at that time.

Q: How long were you in Washington?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The training lasted, as I recall, 16 or 17 weeks. Then I went into language training for 4 months only, and almost reached the 3/3 in French, but not quite. Then I was given the consular training and was off to Istanbul as vice consul.

Q: What did you find when you got to Istanbul?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I mentioned previously that while in the Navy I had been in the Far East, but had not traveled to Europe or the Middle East. I found Istanbul quite exotic and very interesting. I, of course, was an enthusiastic, interested junior Foreign Service officer. My wife and I tried to settle in as quickly as we could. I remember apartments were particularly difficult to find.

Q: What kind of housing did you have?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We were required at that time to find our own housing and received an allowance from the State Department which limited us to certain areas and prices of apartments. We managed to find something suitable with a small view of the Sea of Marmora between two other apartment buildings. It was very pleasant getting settled in there. The people all spoke Turkish, of course, and I only had English and French, so I

immediately began a post language training course in Turkish and was able to acquire at least a courtesy level of the language during my time there.

Q: Did you think that the old post language programs were useful?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I thought they were quite useful, even essential, just to get around in the city. My wife also took training so that she could get around on her own.

Q: How did you fit the language training into your day?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I did it during my lunch hour at my desk. We had native speakers who would come in and who had been trained in the FSI method, that is no use of English, start right out, sink or swim speaking the language. Of course, we had a workbook or text that I was able to study in the evenings, but basically we used tapes and the native speaker to get the accent and the sound of the language and then a lot of vocabulary and grammar study when we weren't with the teacher.

Q: What were your specific duties?

SCHIFFERDECKER: My first duty was vice consul in the consular section. I handled American citizens problems, shipping and American seamen, and non-immigrant visas. I had one interesting experience on the American citizens services side. There was one American, a young lady who had married a Turk and was stranded in Istanbul. Her husband had taken her passport away from her, gone to the United States to work, illegally I might add, and she was living with his family in a small village on the Black Sea as a virtual prisoner. She had had two children by her Turkish husband by this time. We were able to get her and the two kids a new passport, but we had to arrange for a loan from her family back in New Jersey in order to get her plane tickets. We did manage to do that. The Department was quite interested in the case. I learned from that how important taking care of American citizens problems were. We ran into a lot of other problems with hippies and others in Istanbul, people who were out of money. We had a small fund in the

consulate for helping American citizens who were destitute and needed a little money for a night in a hotel or something like that. But, that was the beginning of the great beatnik or hippie migration into the Middle East and eventually into Asia and India, etc. We had another major problem trying to persuade the Turkish authorities to release a young 19-year-old American convicted of hashish possession. His father came over from the U.S. and virtually camped out on my doorstep. It was tough persuading the Turks to be lenient when we were otherwise pushing them to crack down on drug smuggling. Does this sound familiar?

Q: Were the Turkish authorities responsive to requests for assistance?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They were rather stiff and forma back then—in 1965. There were vestiges of the Ottoman bureaucracy alive and well in Istanbul. We did have a very competent Foreign Service National, who had been employed by the US government way back when the embassy was in Istanbul before the capital was moved to Ankara. He was born in Montenegro and his family had moved to Istanbul during the migrations after the Ottoman Empire was progressively ousted from the Balkans. His name was Abdurrahman Bey and he was the most distinguished looking and acting gentleman I had ever met. He knew, of course, elegant French, Turkish, who knows what Balkan languages, and English as well and we relied on him heavily as our main interface with the provincial and municipal authorities in Istanbul in order to get things cleared through customs, all sorts of problems involving Americans who had either been robbed in the covered bazaar or had run out of money. Abdurrahman was respected and was able to intercede very effectively with the local authorities. In fact, Foreign Service Nationals of that caliber were in many of our embassies at that time in the Middle East and were valuable people whom we certainly miss now.

Q: I think in those days working for the United States government was probably one of the best jobs in any given country. With changes in the value of the dollar and in the

governments we still get good people but not quite that layer of really, really excellent folks that we had in many posts that I was in.

SCHIFFERDECKER: I agree totally with you.

There was one other duty I had while in Istanbul which I thought was illustrative of our sometimes convoluted dealings with the so-called Ottoman bureaucracy. In retrospect, it was more a Turkish nationalistic kind of bureaucracy rather than what one might call the classic Ottoman bureaucracy, which at one time was very efficient and a major reason why the Empire lasted over 400 years, but eventually became corrupt like so many bureaucracies do. I was assigned, after my stint in the consular section, to the commercial section to replace the commercial officer who was going on home leave in the summer. My primary duty then was to make arrangements for American exhibitors to obtain foreign exchange allocations to import goods to exhibit at the Izmir International Trade Fair, which was an opportunity for American companies to introduce new products into Turkey. At that time foreign exchange was very scarce and the allocations by the Turkish government for American firms to exhibit goods were strictly controlled by the Ministries of Commerce and Finance in Ankara. The Istanbul consulate was responsible for taking these allocations and parceling them out to the American importers.

At that time IBM, which had an office in Istanbul, wanted to introduce its new IBM Selectric typewriters with a Turkish typeface...remember the round ball? They had developed the Turkish ball at some cost to the company and they wanted to market it to Turkish consumers, especially government and businesses. What happened was, IBM went ahead and developed their Turkish ball, which was reliable and as good as the English one, assuming they would get their import permit or foreign exchange allocation. To my dismay and the company's dismay, that particular year the Turkish government was interested in marketing some low grade Turkish tobacco languishing in warehouses in Izmir which apparently they had difficulty selling abroad. The government, rather deviously cleverly, I thought, decided to force all latecomers to the Izmir Fair including IBM, to buy

an equivalent share in Turkish lira of a quantity of that tobacco and export it in exchange for having a foreign exchange allocation for their exhibits. To cover themselves, the local IBM wanted to claim that I had misled them, but that, of course, was not true. I had, in fact, been very scrupulous in telling them that we did not yet have their foreign exchange allocation even though they went ahead and developed their typewriters.

But in the end, IBM swallowed its pride and disdain for this Turkish method of doing business and bought, I believe, about a hundred thousand dollars worth of Turkish tobacco and dumped it abroad somewhere. I am not sure whether they managed to market it or just dumped it into the ocean. But, it was a good lesson for them and me, that you don't make commitments, especially financial commitments, until you know what the rules of the game are. I ended up being commended for doing the job right, although at one time I thought I was going to be the fall guy.

Q: Did you end up in the good graces of IBM as well as the Department?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes. We had a few laughs about it later on after the Fair got underway, and IBM, by the way, did succeed in introducing its product and did exceptionally well in selling Turkish Selectric typewriters all over the country, some still in use today.

Q: Hopefully it was a net gain for them. You mentioned that you changed your assignment. Was it a rotational thing?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We had the rotational junior officer program in effect at that time. Shortly thereafter, I understand one of the Congressional Committees found out about this “training program” and told the State Department basically to knock it off. I believe it was Congressman Rooney at that time who said, “You, the State Department, had told the Congress that you were recruiting people who were able to hit the ground running, so why do you have this training period for them? They don't need training, they are very capable people and you don't need the extra positions for training abroad. Initial training in

Washington should be sufficient". So, that program was phased out about the time I was going through it. I was designated as being in the political cone.

Q: You were brought into the Service as a political officer?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes. At that time you were allowed pretty much to self-designate your cone and I had wanted to be a political officer. I received rotational training in consular, commercial and econ. I did some econ reporting on Turkish industry. Also in administrative duties for six months. About the time I was ready to go into the political section, I was transferred to Tel Aviv as the ambassador's staff aide, so my political work came later.

Q: Who was the consul general while you were there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The consul general was Lansing Collins. We had two first rate career ambassadors in Ankara. We had Raymond Hare and later Parker Hart, both of whom are well known Foreign Service icons of the 1950s and ''60s.

Q: What were our relations with Turkey like during that year?

SCHIFFERDECKER: During the 1965-66 period there were problems over Cyprus, but they were not as great as they were to become in your time later on and in my time in the early ''80s. Relations in general between the US and Turkey were firm, under control, not necessarily warm, but the Turks needed us and we needed them, as the anchor of NATO's southern flank. I would say relations on a whole were steady, without major bilateral issues. We still had a fairly active aid program and of course close military cooperation and ties.

Q: What kind of sense did you have for the internal political climate with regard to Istanbul versus Ankara at that point?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, there has always been sort of a rivalry and maybe a little bit of jealously between the two cities as to which is really the center of the Turkish universe, but it was always acknowledged that Istanbul was the business and commercial capital of the country and Ankara was the government capital. One can see why there might be feelings of rivalry between the two cities but there was not any noticeable tug-of-war between the government in Istanbul and the government in Ankara. That tension still exists, even with the spread of economic prosperity to other parts of the country.

Q: I wondered if there was a sense that Istanbul felt itself to be semi-autonomous, doing its own thing? I know the central government is pretty powerful in Turkey and always has been.

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think because of that centralization the provincial government and the government in Ankara were on the same wave length at that time. The government was headed by Ismet Inonu at that time. He had been Ataturk's right-hand man. He gave way, while I was there to Suleyman Demirel. Elections were held in 1965. Demirel's party came into power shortly thereafter. That was the beginning of a more wide open democratic system, which eventually led to political excesses and periods of near anarchy and which prompted two military interventions.

Q: On a cultural note, I have always felt the consulate and former embassy in Istanbul as one of the most interesting buildings, but clearly very inefficient. I know there was a recent effort to move to a more modern building out in the country. What are your thoughts on that as a former inhabitant?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The consulate general building in Istanbul is a former 18th or 19th century Italian palazzo on a very narrow, busy commercial street. In terms of our security requirements today, it certainly doesn't meet the criteria, but, it is a beautiful old building and has over time been kept up and restored. It has marble interiors and some ceiling frescos in the style of 18th century Italian palazzi. There was a story that an early

American Minister to the Ottoman Sultan, had won that building in a poker game. I don't know whether that was ever confirmed, but it makes a nice story.

Q: It is a great place and I for one hope we keep it. Let's move on to Tel Aviv. Did you have a direct transfer after only one year in Istanbul?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, it was a direct transfer. I was assigned specifically as the ambassador's staff aide.

Q: How did that come about?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It happened without myself being consulted. In those days junior officers weren't expected to know ahead of time where they were being sent, although telegrams were usually sent authorizing travel orders saying that the panel had met in Washington and assigned X to post Y, and that was what happened in my case. I was very happy to have the assignment. It sounded very prestigious to me only a first tour junior officer and going into my second tour and working for the very prestigious career ambassador, Walworth Barbour.

Q: Did you go directly to Tel Aviv or have home leave in between?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I went directly to Tel Aviv from Istanbul taking home leave later.

Q: What was the situation in Israel at that time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very peaceful at the beginning of my tour, except for a few border incidents, incursions by Palestinians along the Jordanian/Israeli border and later along the Syrian/Israeli border. Those incidents were at the time we thought pin pricks. Of course, Nasser was in power in Cairo and there were constant fulminations and threats against Israel and the United States. Less than a year later the situation changed dramatically. Israel and Syria exchanged artillery fire in the Golan Heights in the spring of 1966 and there were air battles. This led to a closing of ranks among the Arabs and

Nasser's crossing of the Suez, ostensibly to aid Egypt's Arab brethren. He forced the UN peacekeepers to evacuate the Sinai which had been virtually free of military forces. When the Egyptians began moving toward Israel's border in large numbers with heavy armor, the Israelis became very alarmed and, as you know, struck preemptively in what was called Six Day War.

Q: So, you were there throughout that tense period. How about some reflections on the job of aide to an ambassador and what you learned about the ambassador's jobs and aide's jobs?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, my job was mainly pushing the paper, making sure it was ready for the ambassador's review and sign off. It was the typical staff position which occurs in Washington as well as in the field. I was required by the ambassador to translate his handwriting, which was sometimes difficult to read, into cables when there was no secretary to take the dictation. Occasionally I was given special assignments by the ambassador to go to the Foreign Ministry. Basically it was delivering things which he had promised Abba Eban or the head of the Israeli MFA's American Section in Jerusalem. Of course, with the embassy in Tel Aviv and the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, it involved a trip of about 45 minutes to an hour each way.

One of the demarches I delivered was a demand for financial restitution after the Six Day War. You may recall that during that War there was a bombing of an American ship, the USS Liberty, a communications ship, manned by the National Security Agency. A number of Americans were killed and wounded in that attack. Israel claimed it had been a mistake, they said they had thought it was an Arab ship. Some people later said the Israelis knew exactly who they were bombing, i.e., they didn't want us monitoring what they were doing. But, in any case, we were called after the attack by Israeli Defense Minister Dayan to come to the aid of that ship, saying that the ship had been disabled and there were probably casualties on board. They flew our military attach# out by helicopter to communicate with the ship. This communication was by flashing light as it was night

and because the bombing had knocked out all of the electronics. So, we found out that there were around several dozen Americans killed or wounded in that attack. Somewhat later I presented to the Foreign Ministry a bill for the damages suffered by the ship and indemnity for the families who had lost loved ones. The total, I believe, was around ten million dollars. That was presented to the American Section in the Foreign Ministry. The recipient, an Israeli named Shlomo Argov (later Ambassador to Mexico and the UK), said that he would refer the matter to the highest levels in government and eventually, I understand, compensation was paid.

Q: It was interesting being the person who was the messenger in that case, I am sure there was a lot of tension. I do remember that there was a lot of tension about that case. During that period were there any special meetings or events between the United States and Israel, prior, during or after the war?

SCHIFFERDECKER: There certainly were a lot of consultations. The Israelis did not tell us ahead of time they were going to attack. They claimed they were acting in self defense and a case could be made that an attack by the other side would have left them crippled and maybe unable to do what they did which was to destroy the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian air forces on the ground before they were able to attack Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. President Johnson was livid about not being consulted and demanded an explanation, which Ambassador Barbour obtained from Prime Minister Eshkol. Basically, the explanation was, Israel could not afford to wait to be attacked; by then it would be too late to defend themselves. Shortly after the onset of the Six Day War a White House emissary came from President Johnson. He spent some time in the embassy getting in touch with the Israelis and coordinating with the defense establishment on the resupply of ammunition and other armaments that Israel expended in the war. There were a lot of postmortems conducted and delegations came to us and Israelis traveled to the United States. The most immediate action came up in the Security Council. Abba Eban, the Foreign Minister, flew to New York and the famous UN Security Council Resolution 242 was negotiated with our help and 242 continues to be one of the basic documents

undergirding today's peace process. One of its main provisions, the inadmissibility of territorial gain by conquest, has helped to constrain Israeli expansionists and to keep the Arabs at the negotiating table.

Q: What other manifestations of the special relationship between the United States and Israeli were apparent at that time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Relations at that time were strong, and durable. We didn't have the extent of defense cooperation, perhaps, that we do today or intelligence sharing. Although that began to increase in the aftermath of the Six Day War, and more perhaps after the 1973 war. But one incident did come up which pitted Israel and the United States against one another. That was on nuclear proliferation. We did get word through open non-intelligence sources that Israel was producing weapons grade material. As a result of that we made a number of demarches to Israel warning them not to proceed on that track, much as we had done with other countries such as Pakistan, that had moved towards the capability of producing nuclear weapons. Of course, the Israelis did have a small reactor for research purposes and Israeli scientists are among the best in the world in many fields. But, this did create some tension in US/Israeli relations which continued long after I left and were never totally resolved because Israel still today is not a signatory of the Non Proliferation Treaty.

Q: Turning to internal politics. Was there any problem or perceived interference in Israeli internal affairs? I'm not thinking of official interference, but the large Jewish community and visits.

SCHIFFERDECKER: There were no major issues of such interference or accusations of such interference in Israeli internal affairs. There were a couple of amateur efforts by well meaning private Americans to come over and try to promote peace between Israel and the Arabs. One of them was a Rabbi from Massachusetts named Baruch Korff, who wanted the Israelis to take unilateral steps to open relations with Jordan, Egypt and other

Arab states, which he had visited—again strictly on his own. It was an interesting effort but the Israelis were not yet ready, nor were the Arabs ready to talk to the Israelis about peace. The logjam was broken only after the 1973 war, when the Arab side recovered some sense of pride and Israel began to realize that periodic wars did not advance their goal of security.

Q: Moving to the unofficial side in Israel, was the fact that Israel did have difficult or no relations with its neighbors affect your own ability to move around? Did you feel isolated?

SCHIFFERDECKER: To some extent yes. Before the Six Day War when Jerusalem was a divided city and before Israel took it over entirely, we were able to go to Jordan through the Mandelbaum Gate which was torn down by the Israelis the day after the Six-Day War when they unified the city, literally opening roads that had been closed for almost 20 years.

The feeling of isolation increased somewhat after that because only persons on official business could travel between Israel and Jordan by land. Of course, one could go by aircraft to Cyprus and take Middle East Airlines to Beirut, Amman and Cairo.

Q: Did your Israeli accreditation cause problems in Arab countries?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The Arab countries would not accept for admission into the country a passport containing an Israeli visa, but at that time the State Department could issue a second passport to those on official travel which Arabs would accept. So, we were able to get around the problem although we did not have diplomatic relations while I was there with most of the Arab countries.

Q: What were living conditions like in Tel Aviv?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Living conditions were quite comfortable. Houses were small, but clean and well built. We were mostly living north of Tel Aviv in the so-called diplomatic ghetto, Herzliyya Petuach, which contained not only foreign diplomats but also Israeli civil

servants and business people. It has become quite a large Mediterranean resort city and residential area north of Tel Aviv stretching further north today to the old Roman city of Caesarea.

Q: Any interesting aspects of how Ambassador Barbour ran an embassy or anecdotes about him?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Ambassador Barbour was a professional in every sense of the word. A seasoned diplomat who had served in Moscow, London and at least one Middle East post, when he came to Tel Aviv. He was ambassador in Israel close to 13 years. I think I was his eighth staff assistant. He had the habit of coming in in the morning at normal business hours, a little bit later than most of his staff. His papers were stacked up and waiting. He would look through his papers and pared down the sheaf of telegrams that I had filtered for him and taken out some of the stuff he had no interest in, although he had a wide interest in everything to do with managing the embassy as well as all the political and economic cables. Along about eleven or twelve he would finish his paperwork and confer individually with the section chiefs. If he had a demarche or some matter to take up, which was frequently with Jerusalem, he would get in his old Cadillac limo with his driver Shalom and head for the Jerusalem hills, and do his work with the Foreign Ministry, usually with the Foreign Minister, himself, or the Director General of the American Section, Moshe Bittan. Then he would return home for lunch and would not return to the office. I would run paper out to him if necessary. Once or twice a week he would try to play golf. As the Six Day War approached and in the aftermath of the war he was unable to find time to play golf and he frequently spent the entire day in the embassy. His work habits were somewhat laid back but he was a very efficient processor of the substantive material. He had a competent staff who kept him informed. It was a very smooth running office, a real model of an efficient embassy. Though it was not a very large embassy, like London and Paris...

Q: How large was it?

SCHIFFERDECKER: My recollection is that it was around 40-45 officer personnel and 20 or fewer American support personnel. If you count State and the other agencies you would have maybe 65 Americans and then a fairly large local staff.

Q: Well, Ambassador Barbour was a fairly colorful character which you have indicated. Were there any other anecdotes about him?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I would say he was a gentleman through and through. He treated everyone with respect. He never raised his voice and I never heard him say a word in anger. His sister, who was also a single person, as Ambassador Barbour was, used to come out during the Christmas holidays and be his hostess for the holidays and the ambassador would have staff in for Christmas parties and American occasions like the 4th of July. He entertained in a very certain special way. He had a table that seated 24 people and he liked to have the table full. He had a wide range of government and business contacts that he entertained regularly. Of course, there were many CODELS to Tel Aviv. The saying during my day back then was that any congressman who was running for reelection had to travel to one or more of the three I's—Israel, Italy and Ireland—in order to show the constituents that they cared about the old country. The ambassador kept a very set schedule for his dinners. A set amount of time for drinks, a certain amount of time for dinner, followed by cigars and cognac for the men in the library, then rejoining the ladies in the salon afterwards. Everybody was usually out the door by 11:15 or so. He was a man of very regular habits. He was a rather portly gentleman and had been a chain smoker. He had the beginning of emphysema while I was there. He would frequently alarm visitors when he would pull out his inhaler, lean way back in his chair and spray it to get his breathing back on track. He would say, “No, go ahead and speak,” when they would stop as he used his inhaler. Remember, these devices were not very common back then as they are today with asthmatics and people with breathing problems.

Q: What was the DCM's job like under an ambassador who was so interested in everything?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The DCM did not have as much of a role in handling the substance of the embassy work as he did in overseeing the administrative part of the embassy because the ambassador handled the major issues himself or dealt directly with his section heads. I don't know that this was necessarily a personality issue between Ambassador Barbour and DCM, Bill Dale, but only when Barbour took his home leave did Dale have a little more scope to run the embassy and deal with the political issues which the ambassador liked to do when he was there.

Q: Back to the social life. Were you as staff aide involved in protocol duties as well as other things?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Oh, yes, I was required to make sure that the guest list was in order. I maintained the lists of official government personnel, business people and other movers and shakers. I advised other sections; on protocol and procedures. I conferred with the ambassador on who his guests were to be and with his secretary who handled the invitations. I placed the guests in protocol order and made sure the seating was according to protocol requirements. That turned out to be not such a difficult job. I always showed the seating plan to the ambassador ahead of time so that he could play around with it and occasionally he would change things around and not go by strict protocol if he noticed there might be some conflict with people sitting beside each other. Normally, he was a stickler for rank order. Remember, he had been DCM in London many years. I frequently was invited as a fill in and was out by the swinging doors normally. So, I got to participate in many of these formal dinners. He enjoyed having black tie dinners as well, so that was part of his entertaining. It probably no longer exists at that embassy, although I am not certain. The Israelis, of course, were very informal, usually not wearing a coat and a tie to the office, but they certainly did at his residence.

Q: Was your wife invited to those dinners?

SCHIFFERDECKER: At that time I was divorced and single. I remarried later.

Q: I see. Okay, let's move on to your next assignment in the Department. How did that come about?

SCHIFFERDECKER: My assignment to the Department was not the one I particularly wanted, it was to the Public Affairs Bureau. I was hoping to get a regional bureau where I would be a desk officer or something like that. I was assigned to the Bureau of Public Affairs in the media liaison office. It turned out that I enjoyed it quite a bit. Dealing with the press in the State Department can sometimes be ticklish but normally if you establish good relations with the press you develop a mutual respect and a way of working out issues and problems. I was not in the spokesman's office, at that time Bob McCloskey. Media liaison meant assisting broadcast or print media to get interviews or to have access or to answer their questions about certain issues that were not necessarily of a daily nature, daily development of foreign policy.

At that time Vietnam was a major issue in our foreign relations and we were doing our best to get the story of Vietnam according to our interpretation out to the media. We provided access to many of the policy makers in the Department on Vietnam as part of that effort.

Another duty in the Bureau of Public Affairs, a special assignment I had, was to deal with the media during the 20th anniversary of NATO celebrations in 1969, held in Washington. That involved a month of preparations ahead of time. A lot of foreign journalists came to report on the anniversary and President Nixon spoke at the Department of Commerce's auditorium where the ceremonies were held. I think at that time the Acheson auditorium was deemed to be too small to hold all the delegations from all the NATO countries plus all the visitors and media, so it was held in the Department of Commerce.

Another special assignment that I had was to be the head of media liaison for the INTELSAT conference. The organizing conference of the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization, which was also held in 1969. Leonard Marks, who was head of the USIA at one time, was the head of the US delegation, and I was his press advisor and spokesman and head of the media relations. Now, that was a highly technical conference and I had no experience dealing with technical issues such as telecommunications up to that time, but reading furiously through all of the documentation that we had and background papers, I was able to master in perhaps a superficial but adequate way, I thought, the material that I was dealing with. Since a lot of the discussions, both in plenary session and in the smaller committee groups, was highly technical, I was required to do press releases to make it intelligible to non-technical personnel. Some of the journalists had better technical knowledge than I, but I felt very good about the whole thing because I was complimented on the clarity of the press summaries that I had done and shown to others in the US delegation before they were put out, of course. I had tremendous help from Michael Bandler from USIA who did a good job working with me on these press releases. So, I received compliments from Ambassador Marks and from my own Public Affairs bosses for that.

So, in fact, just about any assignment that you get in the State Department, even if it is not your first choice, usually turns out to be an interesting one.

Q: Where did the media liaison office fit into the organization? It wasn't part of the news division I take it.

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, it was part of the public liaison and press liaison offices and at that time was under a man by the named Bill Blair, who was quite an astute office director. He was a political appointee, but a very pleasant gentleman to work with who later went on to work for the Nature Conservancy as an environmentalist.

Q: Does that mean then that you dealt more with journalists who were not part of the regular State Department press corps, or them as well?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Sometimes when they had a special request to interview the Secretary of State—at first Dean Rusk and later on Cyprus Vance—or his deputies, we handled that. The press office only handled the daily noon news briefing and press releases of a perishable nature, that is, releases of information about breaking developments. The media liaison and public liaison offices, where I worked, dealt with less perishable requests for interviews and information. Our office also sent officers out from the State Department all over the US on media and broadcast interview tours. Some of them participated in the talk shows of that time. As I mentioned, we were interested in getting our story out on Vietnam and that was a big part of it.

As a small aside, I personally was not very enthusiastic about our Vietnam policy, but I was told by my superiors I had better get with the program and mind my responsibility regardless of my personal views. I agreed on this. At that time, I didn't feel that our policy was immoral or of a nature that would cause a person with a conscience to resign. I felt, rather, that practically and strategically it was the wrong fight, the wrong war, at the wrong time. I was a great admirer of Walter Lippmann who said, “Never get involved in a land war in Asia.” And, of course, that warning was ignored and to our peril we paid the price for it.

Q: That raises an interesting question about the Foreign Service, which is how do you go about divorcing your own feelings? This arises in other cases usually in smaller issues than that but where you are required to carry out acts that you might not necessarily agree with.

SCHIFFERDECKER: I have never been put in a position where I was asked to do something that I felt was absolutely repugnant to my principles. Sending someone out on a media tour to get the administration's side to the public on Vietnam did not appear to me to be an immoral responsibility. It wasn't my primary responsibility in any case. In fact, I

felt that even though I opposed our deepening involvement in Vietnam in the late '60s, that if I had been assigned to Vietnam I would go because maybe I would be convinced that what we were doing was right, because most of my information like many other people's information about the Vietnam situation even in government came from extensive press reporting. So, I was willing to be persuaded that maybe there was a lot more to Vietnam than I had thought. But, of course, I wasn't assigned to Vietnam, for whatever reason, so I was never able to test whether my beliefs were correct or not, except through the passage of time.

Q: Did you ever have the situation where you were required to go in and make a demarche that you found it hard to do with a straight face? I felt I had some of those where you knew what you had to say and what they had to say and it was almost more of a ceremony than a real attempt to get them to change their views.

SCHIFFERDECKER: I have done demarches later on in my career where I knew the answer was going to be “no,” but generally speaking I felt we had a point to make. I was never given a demarche to do that I totally disagreed with. Maybe I disagreed with the way the issue was presented and, of course, we in the Foreign Service are able to take a little bit of liberty occasionally to repackage the demarche and make it more palatable to the host government, although we have to be careful how far we can go on that, as you know. But we do have to make the case as best we can.

Q: I think that is the point, that one of the reasons that they need to have people abroad is precisely because they have a feeling how best to present something to the host country, whereas the people back in Washington, especially in the case of some of those wholesale demarches where you get just a general line and you have to figure out how to make it the most effective.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That is right. I know in cases where I worked for ambassadors, I know more than one who managed to rewrite his instructions taking more liberties than

I would have as a political officer or political counselor in my presentations. Although I was able to elaborate them differently, perhaps, I didn't rewrite my instructions as some ambassadors I know have.

Q: Having that assignment in Washington, was your thought it was good in the end to get back and see what was going on in the States? Would you have rather stayed overseas? How did you feel about that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: At that time I was ready to be in the Department of State. I felt that two tours abroad and then one tour in the Department would give me a better grounding. I toyed with the idea of working on the 7th floor in the Secretariat, but ended up taking the advice of one of my mentors, former ambassador Bob Dillon, who was in Personnel at that time and whom I had known in Turkey when I was in Istanbul. His advice was that perhaps I should go for a hard language and use that as my vehicle to get a good job overseas. Up to this time I had not had a good solid political reporting officer job overseas. I was assigned to Persian language training and to Tehran as my onward assignment. That assignment to Tehran was changed to Kabul in mid language training. Fortunately the languages of both countries are quite similar, although there are differences between Dari, which is Afghan Persian, and Iranian Persian. But, I was able to make the transition. I was assigned to Kabul in 1970 as the second political officer in a two man section.

Q: Did you get language training by volunteering for it or was it suggested to you?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I picked the language and the post went with the language. Normally at that time, it was just beginning to happen, we didn't have an open assignments bidding process that came later as a result of the Foreign Service Act of 1980, but I was able to spot a job opening in Tehran a year a head of time and volunteer for the language training at the same time with the help of my assignment officer. So, that was the beginning of identifying jobs before language training, although there were many who went into Arabic language training or Chinese or other hard language training assignments that lasted

more than a year in some cases where you didn't know where you were going yet. You only knew you would go to one specific country, or in the case of Arabic, one of several countries that would be able to use your language skills.

Q: And as it was, even knowing your assignment, you didn't know it.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That is right. I had the position identified and didn't have the orders in hand. What happened was someone left their post in Kabul a year ahead of plan, so I was asked to fill that gap.

Q: You didn't really lose the job in Tehran to somebody else through a tour extension or something like that, it was because of the Kabul situation where they needed somebody.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right. The job, I think, in Tehran that I was going to was left unfilled for a period of time or someone filled it without language training.

Q: So, what was the situation in Kabul in 1970?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, in Kabul it was quite peaceful and tranquil. The decade of the '60s in fact leading up to the early '70s was a period when the King of Afghanistan, Zahir Shah, introduced parliamentary democracy. He called it an experiment in democracy because the country had not known much of that kind of governing. Up until that time they had a series of strongmen prime ministers where the king presided over the country but did not rule...reigned but did not rule. The prime ministers up to the early 1960s were strongmen, usually members of the extended royal family. After that time commoners were brought in to head parliamentary governments. That process was just going strong when I got there and was just beginning to show some results after two elections in the '60s. Politically the country was stable. We had a fairly extensive AID program, not so much in dollar terms being something between $25-$30 million per year, which was not a large program in those days, but a large number of AID people. We had a lot of Americans on

the ground at that time. Probably, including Peace Corps, 250 or more Americans plus dependents. There were a lot of contractors for AID.

When I arrived the ambassador wanted to more fully integrate the economic and political sections of the embassy with AID. He felt that some of the AID projects that we had had in the past, rightly so, had not worked out so well in every case because they had not been grounded in the political or economic realities of the country. So, we worked very closely with our AID counterparts and with the rest of the country team. The ambassador at that time was Robert Neumann, who later became our ambassador to Morocco and then, for a short time, to Saudi Arabia.

Q: He was a non-career?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right. Robert Neumann was an academic from California and had been ambassador in Kabul for three years, at least when I got there, and was ambassador for another two years afterward.

In any case, things fell apart in Afghanistan.

Q: During that time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Shortly after I left.

Q: Oh, so it stayed stable the whole time you were there.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Pretty much so. There was a serious drought the summer that I left and in order for our emergency assistance program to be operational in any country we had to have a request for the government, basically a declaration of an emergency. After much pushing on the Afghan government which was reluctant to issue a declaration, they did issue one which was basically drafted in AID. Because it was viewed in the country, by the people, as begging for assistance instead of being self-reliant as Afghanistan frequently had to be because there were no aid programs in earlier years, the king and his

government were severely criticized and a year later a coup was staged by a member of the royal family but a coup in which Muhammad Daud, the leader of the coup, ended up by seizing power and abolishing the monarchy. That eventually became the end of both parliamentary rule in Afghanistan and independence. The pro-Russian Communist Party in Kabul was able to seize power on behalf of the Russians who moved in quickly several months later in 1979 and you know the rest of the story.

Q: Were there signs of this happening even while you were there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very little. During my time, 1970-72, we saw the interests of our government and the Russians as being compatible in Afghanistan. Afghanistan had occupied the position of a buffer state between British India and expanding Imperialist Russia in the 19th and early 20th centuries. That status continued in independent India and Pakistan and the Soviet Union. The United States felt that there were no basic incompatibilities between our position in Afghanistan, which was to assist in a modest but responsible way to educate and help the Afghans develop their own country. Whereas the Russians had a larger program, an infrastructure program and military assistance program. We had a very, very small military training program where we trained some of the Afghan officers. But the Russians had a heavy arms supply and training program of a Russian nature and the army ended up being the nucleus for the Russians to move in and take over. And, of course, the infrastructure, the highways, that they built in the north were used to bring tanks into the country from the Soviet Union to take over control of the capital and other major cities in the country.

Q: Our relations with the Soviet Union at that time were kind of on the upswing anyway weren't they, leading toward detente?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, it was a period of detente, the period of the Nixon administration when we were signing some of our first strategic arms agreements with the Brezhnev regime and no one felt that Russian interests were threatened by what we

were doing in Afghanistan or any other country. There was a large international presence of Germans and United Nations. It was only when the Shah of Iran started courting the Afghan government in the mid-1970s and tried to cut deals to wean the Afghans away from dependence on Russia that the Russians became alarmed. The Russians thought that we, Iran and Pakistan were trying to roll them back—sort of a U.S.-led “plot” against them. In fact, some believe that this was the proximate cause for the Russians to move into Afghanistan 1979, even though Iran was already engulfed in the Khomeini revolution generally, I believe the Russian occupation was mainly opportunistic, that is, they moved in only when the Afghan Communists took over the country but then began to falter and they needed outside help to survive.

Q: You have talked about the monarchy and the coup that took place later, but what about the ethnic divisions in the country, were they sort of stamped out at that point or like in many places very real at all times?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The ethnic groups of the country were basically bought off by royal patronage and by the classical political balancing of one group off with another. Each ethnic group seemed to feel that it had a piece of the pie, small as it was and not expanding very rapidly, but yet it seemed that every ethnic group had a stake in the country continuing on an even keel with political stability and a growing national consciousness, which was occurring when I was there. Unfortunately, it didn't last.

Q: Were you free to travel around the country and did you do that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I certainly did. The highway construction had not been completed fully in the north yet, but there was access through the Hindu Kush Mountains north of Kabul to Mazar-e Sharif, to the beginning of the steppe country of central Asia and to some of the rug weaving country of northern Afghanistan, which is where I first developed a taste for oriental rugs. I traveled north, south, east and west. We were able to travel out of Afghanistan by road to Iran, which was quite remote on the other side of the country

from where Kabul was in the eastern part of the country. We were also able to travel by road, built by the United States incidentally, through the Kabul Gorge and the Khyber Pass into Peshawar, Pakistan. It happened that that road was the main road used by the Americans who were being evacuated out of Pakistan during the Indo-Pak war of 1971 when I was there, and that is another story.

Q: Tell us a little about that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: There were large numbers of Americans in Pakistan when India and Pakistan went to war over Pakistani repression in the East Bengal, out of which emerged Bangladesh in 1971. Because of my language capability, I was asked to go to the border at Torkham, which is at the head of the Khyber Pass on the Afghan side, to help process Americans being evacuated from Pakistan along the road to Kabul and then to fly out of Kabul by the Afghan National Airline to either Rome or Frankfurt where they flew. We did process several hundred American families, dependents, contractors working on the big Tabala Dam project in Pakistan and had a very interesting time of it.

Q: How long were you there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I camped there for three days and nights; no hotel or anything other than a sleeping bag and a couple of tents to stay in; we cooked our own food. On the second day there was a big stir at the border as Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, shortly to become prime minister of Pakistan, was coming through the Khyber to go on to Kabul to fly to New York to defend Pakistan's position at the UN Security Council which was drafting a resolution to stop the war. I spoke with him briefly, verified that he was going to Kabul (because all of Pakistanis, civilian airports were closed down), and wished him a safe trip. I then radioed the Embassy, to make sure our government was aware of what was going on.

Q: Later Pakistan became quite a big player in Afghanistan, was there any of that at that time or did they have enough problems with India to not worry about it?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Relations were correct but occasionally tense during my time because Afghanistan would periodically play what we called the Pashtunistan card. The idea was to have the Pashtuns on both sides of the border, which was the British imposed Durand Line dividing the Pashtun tribes between Afghanistan and Pakistan, to be brought together. It was never stated that Afghanistan wanted to annex this territory, but the Afghan idea was to use this as a pressure point on Pakistan and also as a way of stirring up Pashtun national sentiment in Afghanistan, thereby diverting attention from internal problems that bedeviled the monarchy and the government in Kabul. In any case the tribes straddling the mountainous border area moved more or less freely back and forth, a feature that was very useful later on for supplying the Afghan freedom fighters against the Russian invaders, as you noted.

Q: For the benefit of those who might not know, what are the major tribal groups in Afghanistan?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The main Afghan ethnic groups are roughly six in number. The predominant group are the Pashtuns who comprise maybe 40-45 percent of the population. There are the Tajiks, the next largest group, maybe 20 percent. I use approximations because nobody ever knew exactly how many people belonged to each ethnic group or the total population of Afghanistan which was roughly estimated to be about 14 million during my time there. Then you had the Uzbeks, probably less than 10 percent also predominantly in the north along with the Turkmen who numbered less than 150,000. In the southwest and west you had the Baluchi group, related to similar groups in Iran and Pakistan, including some who were partially nomads and who led their camels and donkeys and herds of goats to higher elevation pasturage in the northern part of Afghanistan in the summer and then went down to the Indus Plains crossing the border into Pakistan to winter over. They were always a colorful sight with whole families

on the move and chickens riding precariously on the backs of donkeys or camels. Last you had a Shia ethnic group called the Hazara living mainly in the center of the country. They numbered about one million and were said to be the descendants of Genghis Khan's army. I mention them last because the Hazara was low man on the totem pole, the most discriminated against and occupied the lowest rung on the economic ladder, in part probably because they were Shia instead of Sunni which was the predominant Muslim sect of the country. Physically, they were also easy to identify because of their Oriental features. In fact, many of them found jobs as domestics for American homes in Kabul. I had a cook and a bearer in my time in Kabul, both of whom were Hazara.

Q: Interesting how that kind of situation arises where Americans get to know countries through their associates, including their servants, and there is a little bit of bias towards that. Did you sense that at all?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Of course, and the reason being that many of the other ethnic groups would not take such menial positions. You even saw on the streets of Kabul in my time heavily loaded wagons and carts being pulled by Hazaras, by people, not by donkeys or by horses or any other beast of burden. You would see two Hazaras at the yoke pulling these heavily laden carts around Kabul. This really grated on Western sensibilities and gave many the impression that Afghans could be very cruel to each other.

Q: So, here you were new in your first political assignment. Did it meet your expectations and what were your thoughts about that aspect, the professional side of your job?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was given pretty much free range on doing political reporting on domestic political issues. I handled some foreign political issues, but that was usually the chief of the section, the counselor's job. At one time I was acting counselor and handled all of the issues, both demarches and foreign policy issues as well as domestic political reporting. The non-urgent political reporting was done, still in my time in the early '70s, by airgram and I did a weekly roundup of political developments in and around Kabul and

elsewhere in addition to special reports that we did about the parliament and the parties or the judiciary or the media, the student movements at the universities, and that sort of thing.

We had wide access to all of the domestic political elements in the society, including the Communist parties. In fact, I even had Communist party deputies to my home for lunch occasionally or for a reception. The ambassador and the DCM at that time felt that they would not entertain Communist party diplomats, so I was able to do that with relative ease, although it wasn't a frequent occasion. We would have rival party members who didn't speak to each other at my home for a reception with a buffet, usually a garden type of reception in the summer when the weather was pleasant which it was in the evenings, Kabul being at over 5,000 feet altitude.

Getting back to my job, one of the things I was able to do was to get a lot of the other official Americans to let me know what was going on in their areas. We had many contractor employees for AID. I would not be able to cover all of the ministries that they dealt with in the course of their work, so frequently at meetings at the embassy or in social occasions I was able to talk with them. They would tell me what was going on at the university and I was able to tell them the larger political picture into which that fit and it helped them to understand some of the problems they were running into. So, we had a mutually beneficial exchange of information within our own official family. Of course, I dealt a lot with other international residents, including the UN people and colleagues of other embassies and their political officers for the exchange of information and of course with the Afghans. I frequently attended parliamentary sessions where I learned about the concerns of the entire country. And, of course, we took field trips all over the country, political reporting trips to size up other regional and ethnic concerns as we discussed earlier.

That sort of sums up what I was doing.

Q: Were you able then to be independent with the language not taking an interpreter with you?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I had to use my language capability. Fortunately I had developed it well enough, although certainly not with total fluency, to speak Dari and understand it and also to read the newspapers. We did have a couple of local employees who did a lot of translations of articles for the benefit of all Embassy staff.

Q: You mentioned being able to meet with Communist party leaders who the ambassador and DCM did not feel free to see. Isn't that really one of the great things about being a mid-level reporting officer, that you do have access to a wider range of people than the ambassador, who by the very nature of things is confined to ministers and permanent secretaries and ambassadors and people like that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, I agree with the thrust of your comment and question entirely. In some cases if the ambassador had entertained say, Communist parliamentarians who were viewed by the establishment as the lowest of the low, he would have been roundly criticized by the Afghan establishment and probably warned. Yes, it did allow me to have a wide range of contacts, although there were some who did not want to be entertained by an American. The main plotter of the Communist coup of 1979, Hafizullah Amin, head of one of the Communist party factions, hated the United States because he had gone to Columbia University and had flunked out and there may have been some other incident besides that which soured him on us. But he came back to Afghanistan with a chip on his shoulder toward Americans and was very reluctant to accept any kind of invitation, even from me. It took a while before he agreed to have lunch one-on-one with me because he, being a very secretive person and a plotter at heart, thought that other people would find out that he had had met alone with me at the embassy. I frequently dealt with parliamentarians on a one-on-one basis as it was easier to get information that way.

Q: But, he finally did it?

SCHIFFERDECKER: He did.

Q: Was it a good lunch?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I had an Afghan cook who knew how to serve a good lunch and many Afghans would not drink alcoholic beverages in front of each other, but in a one-on-one situation some would enjoy a beer, nothing stronger than that, or a glass of wine. Whereas at a reception they would not imbibe in front of others. But, there was a certain amount of reluctance to do things that might be considered risque in their society with a foreigner. That is because Afghanistan was still emerging from being a closed conservative Muslim society.

Q: Did he open up in these conversations at all?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Oh yes, quite easily. Usually Afghans would have some message that they wanted to get across to the Americans and, of course, we would be basically trying to get more understanding and information about what was going on in that session in parliament that morning or the day before. So, we were basically in an information gathering mode and understanding mode, and they were in a message giving mode. Many of the parliamentarians, not necessarily the Communists, were interested in taking a parliamentary tour in the United States, which was one of the benefits of our International Visitors Program we were able to hold out to some of the parliamentarians.

Q: That is a very important point because I always felt those International Visitors Programs were a wonderful way to spend money. How many did you have during your time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We only had one group that made it off the ground while I was there. They spent over a year haggling over who should go. At one point they decided that no one should go. Eventually, one group did go, but it was like pulling teeth.

Q: Basically you had entered the Service wanting to be a political officer and now you were one. Looking back on the two years was it what you thought it was going to be, as good as you thought it would be?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was as good or better than I thought it was going to be, the opportunity to be a classical political reporting officer in Afghanistan. There weren't high priorities for reporting in Washington about things going on in Afghanistan at that time, but there was quite an audience as I found out when I went back on consultations later and did a lot of debriefing around the town, including at Langley, the State Department and other departments like Commerce. I was surprised to find out that there were some people at the National Security Council who followed some of our reporting there.

I had a fairly free rein to do a lot of reporting on subjects of my own choosing, although there were the classic set of issues that we are normally interested in in looking at domestic developments in any country. In fact, I was rewarded by being nominated as the Foreign Service reporting officer of the year for my reporting in Kabul. I didn't get the award, but I was one of six nominees.

Q: I'm sure the reporting came in handy later on when Afghanistan did become important because a lot of the characters were probably the same people.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Some of them were but many were done in to my chagrin and dismay, of course. It was a brutal change which occurred later on when I was Afghan desk officer.

Q: We will get to that later, but what years were they?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That was the first coup, I'm talking about 1973, after I had returned to the United States. I first did a mid-career fellowship at Princeton for one academic

year and then I was recruited to be the desk officer for Afghanistan and also worked on Pakistan affairs from 1973-75.

Q: Before we leave Kabul, do you have any other incidents or anecdotes about your time in Kabul that you want to report on?

SCHIFFERDECKER: There is one other anecdote I felt proud of being involved in. At that time, of course, the cold war was going strong. We had a Russian defector on our hands who had come into the embassy. Of course, we had a procedure of turning any would-be defector over to the normal interviewing people assigned to the embassy. It was decided by higher authority in Washington that the United States would accept custody of this person and try to get him and his family out of the country because Afghanistan would not itself facilitate the departure of a Russian national to the United States. They did not want to alienate their Soviet friends.

The embassy decided, after putting our heads together, to take this man, his wife and two children out in a large diplomatic pouch across the land border, again at the Torkham border crossing that leads to the Khyber Pass into Pakistan where the government of the time would be more amenable to allowing someone to depart its country who had entered it irregularly. I was in one of two cars that accompanied these people to the border. Now, this Russian was a technician, he was not a political officer of the embassy, which would have been a much bigger prize, but it was felt that he knew enough about things going on in Russia and Afghanistan and how the Russians ran their technical assistance programs, that he was worth lifting out and being brought back for debriefings. When we got near the border, this was in daylight, which was the only time you could cross, we put the family all in one big diplomatic pouch with a few holes in it in the back of a carryall van, one of the embassy's vans, and I was following in an embassy car driving it myself without a driver because we didn't want any Afghan driver involved in this operation. We were all a little bit nervous but we went through the normal procedures of checking out with the Afghan

authorities and checking in with the Pakistani authorities, and there were the inevitable waits of 15 or 20 minutes at each side of the border.

There was a lot of nervousness, but we did manage to get them through and I was rather proud of the fact that we were able to help a man and his family to freedom, which was what they opted for. They had made a difficult commitment and choice to do that without much idea of where or how they were going to end up. From what I heard, everything went successfully and as far as I know they are living somewhere here in the United States today.

Q: That is an example of the kind of unique thing that occurs to you once in a while. It seems to me that in most posts at some point there is a moment when something quite unusual occurs and usually you are glad that you have the chance to do it.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, indeed.

Q: It was a big American mission in Kabul, mostly AID, but some Defense people, I assume, and some intelligence?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, we had intelligence officers and a Defense Attach#'s office, although no Naval Attach# however, Afghanistan being a landlocked country, and in addition to a sizeable AID Mission we had a Peace Corps presence.

Q: How about your observations on the Peace Corps?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We had Peace Corps when I was assigned to Turkey and I had some encounters there with Peace Corps and their problems. The Peace Corps in Afghanistan was largely dealing, at least when I arrived, with teaching English. There was a voracious appetite to learn English, although we did have some volunteers in health and rural development. That rural development program expanded a lot while I was there. We sent more people outside the main provincial cities, especially during a terrible

drought that I referred to earlier in 1972 when people were starving and we had to develop some programs mainly to get food to the people who needed it. The Peace Corps was very instrumental in making that happen. They developed a food-for-work program and implemented it very successfully.

Q: Was it a useful program for the United States, for the volunteers, for Afghanistan?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think it was useful for Afghanistan to develop competency in the English language. Overall, I would say that since the Peace Corps is a people intensive type of development program, a lot of the benefits of it were the personal contacts that later on when the Russians invaded and many Afghans were forced to leave the country they were able to reestablish contact with volunteers back in the United States that they had known. I have heard enough of these stories and have experienced myself the nice human aspect to the kind of Peace Corps work that deals on a daily basis and very intensively with host country people, in this case Afghans. So, I would say that it was not as effective as you would want it to be, but on the human level very effective in cementing personal relationships and useful in teaching some skills, especially language skills.

Q: Now we move to Princeton. Tell us about that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I applied for the Department's university training program while I was in Afghanistan and the one that appealed to me, in part because Princeton has a Middle East department, was the program at Princeton University. However, I was assigned to the Woodrow Wilson School, their school for international public affairs. That was my base and that was where the other half dozen Department, USIA and AID officers were assigned during the academic year of 1972-73, along with other agencies' mid-careerists. There was a group of about 28 USG officers at Princeton during my year there. I found it very beneficial.

Q: Was it not an area oriented course?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was and it wasn't. It was under the area studies training rubric of FSI's university training program. I spent about half of my time in the Middle East department and half of my time at Woodrow Wilson. I was very, very busy. I either audited a number of courses, or I took a number of courses for credit, especially at Woodrow Wilson, including some international economics training and some development economics training which I felt I needed a better theoretical grounding in. I found those very beneficial along with Middle East politics studies and some specific country studies.

Q: So, it wasn't where everybody goes through the same courses, it was an individual course for each of the participants?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Everybody was able to tailor their individual program. I felt that this was very useful because there were a lot of areas that I wanted to get into and sample and at least do one semester of work in, if I could. I wrote a number of papers while I was there. The school found them useful and so did I. I did the same work that a graduate student would have done and had I been more methodical, perhaps I could have gotten a master's degree from the effort. I ended up doing a lot of course work and getting a lot of credits but no degree.

Q: What were your papers on?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I wrote papers in part on my own experience and some on research. I did a paper on modernization in developing countries using Afghanistan as a case history. I did some papers on areas where I had had some knowledge but not direct experience. In an international politics course I did some studies of Middle East crises and how they were handled in the government compared with the Cuban missile crisis, for example. We had had a graduate course which used the Cuban missile crisis as a focus and a book by Graham Allison on that crisis which you may be familiar with. So, I was able to extrapolate from our discussion on that crisis was handled and how the lessons learned could apply, for example, to the Arab/Israel situation.

Q: So, all in all it was a very useful year?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very much. I felt that it was a perfect time to pause between assignments and to get a better theoretical grounding, and to perhaps equip myself with some economic credentials which I lacked.

Q: I am afraid with the budget strains we are having less and less of that, if any at all, now. Then you went back to the Department. How did that assignment process go and how did the system work in getting you an assignment from your university training?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was programmed into the position of Afghanistan desk officer almost as soon as I got to Princeton. The vacancy was coming up for assignment and it was felt by a number of people who were familiar with my work in Kabul that I would be the appropriate person to take over the desk. So, I was consulted this time ahead of time and it became a natural fit for me coming out of Princeton and taking over the desk. I felt it might be too narrow being associated with one country for four years, but while I was Afghan desk officer in Washington, I was also given responsibility for part of the Pakistan portfolio. So, I had a little broader duties.

Q: The whole office was what?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, the office was NEA/PAB, which was Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, Bangladesh being the new boy on the block having become independent two years earlier. I immediately began my duties as desk officer by going to Kabul to fill in during the summer for the political section where one officer had left a year early and the counselor was taking home leave. They put me in the job to hold down the political section for three months until the political counselor and another officer returned. It was at that time that the coup by Muhammad Daud took place in 1973. I reported on the coup, its implications for us and for the region, and the usual things you report when a new government is established and we establish our relations with that government. So, that

was very much appreciated by the Department and I got one nice compliment from Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who was our ambassador in India at that time. He thought it was some of the best reporting he had seen in that type of situation. I felt coming from Moynihan, a political appointee that it was doubly a compliment for me.

Q: A nice person to have one from, Daniel Patrick. Going back to a situation like that, did you find that it was good having all your contacts, etc.?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was like I had never left, Ed. Somehow I just fit myself right in with the situation, which was calm and peaceful the first couple of weeks until the coup occurred. Then there was a lot of chaos and uncertainty for a while and then excitement. But, I did look up all my old friends, or as many as I could, until the coup occurred and then many of them withdrew from contact not knowing which way the wind was blowing. It was tough for a while.

Q: Were any of the coupists among your friends?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, especially those who were in the Foreign Ministry. There was one particular person who was involved in the coup who I had been friendly with and many of the other embassies didn't even know because he was somewhat of an outcast with the previous regime. He became the acting foreign minister which was very handy. Although I had very little access to him because the coup planners and plotters were all in meetings every day, meeting among themselves and not with foreigners particularly. So, it was up really to the ambassador to make contact with the new powers to be in the ministries during those early days. Of course, I had to leave and go back and be the desk officer.

Q: Who was the ambassador at that point?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was still Bob Neumann, but he was leaving and going to Morocco, so as soon as I got back to Washington I began briefing Ted Eliot who was selected as our new ambassador and getting him out to post subsequently.

Q: It strikes me that so often when there is some kind of emergency we are changing ambassadors. I don't know if we plan it that way what?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I guess what frequently happens is that we make our orderly plans but the world is so disorderly that it looks like we haven't planned our part properly, when in fact we have just been overtaken by events.

Q: So what impact did the coup have on US/Afghan relations?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Initially, there was a lot of suspicion that the US was against the coup plotters, that we were pro-monarchy, so we were handled with some coolness and there wasn't a very friendly relationship in the beginning. And, of course, because we were changing top level staff at the embassy as well, there was a diffident period, you might say, in our relations. But, there were no basic changes on the ground. The new regime wanted us to continue our development assistance. They were a little bit chary of our Peace Corps operation, but in the end they allowed that to continue. It was cut back a little bit in size for a while, however. The basic interests that we had in the country, that Afghanistan continue to be an independent state and not be beholden to any one power, such as the Soviet Union, were not damaged by this coup. However, the abolishment of the monarchy created a political vacuum in the country that eventually was filled by the Communist coup of 1978/79 and the Russian invasion which really ended for a period of time Afghanistan independence and its stability. It still is a fractured country today.

Q: What about the effect of the 1973 coup on regional relationships?

SCHIFFERDECKER: There was initially a period of tension between Afghanistan and Pakistan and also with Iran. At that time Iran was still a friend of the United States and we put a lot of stock in our relations with Iran and didn't want to see tensions with Afghanistan or with Pakistan, for that matter. So, there was a period of time when we felt that this new regime of Muhammad Daud was behaving in ways that cranked up the existing tensions

between the two countries. Afghanistan also had problems with Iran on the division of waters between the two countries, the Helmand River. The tensions with Pakistan over Pashtunistan issue were larger and created more problems. What happened was that in both countries, relations were repaired and made actually stronger. Bhutto came to Afghanistan on an unannounced visit. He flew from Pakistan to Kabul giving one hour notice that he was coming and the Afghans were unable to say “no” and it turned out to be on a smaller scale, a Sadat visit to Jerusalem. In any case, because of Bhutto's charisma and personality he was able to overcome some of the tensions that the two countries had. Later the Shah of Iran began offering economic assistance to Afghanistan which the Afghans became interested in and that tended to diffuse some of the tensions between those two countries.

Q: So actually it was sort of similar in the case of both the important neighbors and us in terms of a little dip and then a resumption of kind of normal, positive relations?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes. Except in the case of Iran. I mentioned earlier that there was some Russian suspicion that Iran was acting on our behalf to wean the Afghans away from Russia and that may have contributed to nervousness on the part of the Russians that when their cohorts staged a coup they felt constrained to protect that investment they had made in Afghanistan and come to the aid of the fledgling Communist regime in 1979.

Q: A couple of other questions about Kabul that come to mind. What were our relations with the Russian embassy there during that time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They were cordial but not real friendly. Remember we were still in the period before the Gorbachev era that loosened things up 10-15 years later. So, we maintained some social contacts, but not warm and fuzzy types of relations on a personal basis. They were more or less correct and cordial but not warm. All U.S. officials were required to report to the State Department any contact with Russian or Soviet bloc officials.

Q: How about the British with their role in regional interests? Were they an actor at all?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The British were quite active in Afghanistan at that time, subsequently they have become less concerned and involved. But at that time they maintained a small, but effective embassy staff and a small assistance program, primarily cultural and educational rather than the kind of development aid that we were providing. The British orientalist connection was very useful because they did train their officers in Afghan Persian or Dari, and had a couple of officers who spoke the language and were quite well plugged in. So, we had good relations with the British then which was mutually beneficial in the exchange of information.

Q: Any other major foreign players? What about the Indians?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The Indians and Pakistanis both had well staffed embassies, in Kabul. India provided some aid, mainly agricultural assistance. Pakistan did not have an aid program, as I recall. Afghanistan's relations with Pakistan during my time were cool. Relations with India were warmer.

Q: After your three months you went back to the Department and joined PAB. What did you find when you got there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I found that we were getting ready to change ambassadors for one thing. We were dealing with an entirely new government in Kabul that we were still feeling out. There were some visits by Afghan ministers or deputy ministers and some other functionaries to the United States that the embassy was pushing. They relied very much on me to help develop a useful productive program for them that would help to reinforce, shore up our ties with the new government. We found, also, that one of the big Afghan bilateral problems was their tolerance toward farmers growing opium poppies, increased acreage, including on some of the land that we had helped reclaim and irrigate in the Helmand Valley. Now those poppy fields did not exist when I was there but in a space of

a year or two they began to develop. They had had some traditional cultivation closer to Pakistan in the Jalalabad region, but this was something new and something that we really began to remonstrate with the new government about, to cut back those newly blooming fields of opium poppies in the Helmand Valley.

Q: Were we successful?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Never completely. I think while the Daud regime was in power we were able to get their attention and get them to take some action. But in the traditional poppy growing areas of eastern Afghanistan we made very little headway. A lot of this cultivation was off the main roads, difficult to survey and to see. At that time almost all of the opium gum was exported into Pakistan where labs had been developed in the tribal areas on their side of the border to refine opium into morphine and heroin.

Q: They were the only products from opium poppies I guess.

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, there is a legitimate use for morphine base by the pharmaceutical industry for codeine and one of the Tylenol products and other such products, pain killers. But, most of our purchases of pharmaceutical opium were from India, where the cultivation was more controlled and from Turkey, after the Turks decided to control their cultivation in the 1970s.

Q: What are your observations of the role of a desk officer?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The State Department desk officer has to be a jack of all trades, has to be an outgoing person having to deal with a lot of agencies of the US government, with the private sector, with the general public. It is amazing how much correspondence a desk officer gets from who knows what sources, schools, etc. for information on the country. The main job I felt I had to do in my stint as desk officer for Afghanistan, was to keep my embassy informed about developments in Washington that affected what the embassy was doing and to keep all of the agencies of the US government informed about what was

going on in Afghanistan and what we thought we should be doing in order to support our interests in the country, our interests in the larger region and also to support our objectives in getting the country, itself, in this case Afghanistan, to support our initiatives in other than bilateral forums, like the United Nations.

Q: What kind of communication did you have with the embassy in Kabul? Only by telegram or did you have telephone?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We had very poor telephone service with Kabul. Maybe that was a blessing in a way because we weren't always second guessing each other every morning or late in the afternoon, whenever it would be the right time to communicate with each other on the phone. In an emergency we did communicate by phone, but it wasn't the usual way. We normally communicated by official-informals and by regular State Department telegram. Official-informals were cables that had limited distribution.

Q: Did it really have limited distribution? Did those ever bounce and cause problems?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Not in my experience. But there was a potential for it, I suppose.

Q: Now we have e-mail, I guess, with everybody, so it is a whole different world in terms of communications. It was a lot more formal and on the record in your time.

SCHIFFERDECKER: One of our highlights when I was on the desk was Henry Kissinger's interest in Afghanistan, the first time a Secretary of State had done so for quite a while. First of all we had to persuade Henry that it was in our interest and in his interest too that he visit Afghanistan while on a trip to India and Pakistan. It didn't take a lot of persuading because I think he understood the strategic position of Afghanistan as a buffer state between the free world and the Communists; also his curiosity I think got the better of him. He got quite interested in what made Afghanistan tick when he read a few of our briefing papers. While he was there he also was treated to an exhibition of that famous Afghanistan sport, buzkashi, which is a horse mounted sport involving the body of a goat

which is used basically as a football between two opposing teams. Of course, Kissinger was also interested in Afghanistan's relations with Iran. He wanted Afghanistan to be supportive of our objectives in Iran and to be at peace with Iran. So, he spent a lot of his time in his official talks in Kabul trying to persuade the ultra nationalistic Muhammad Daud to be nice to the Shah of Iran.

Q: And did he get along well with Daud?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Apparently they hit it off very well and Kissinger pronounced himself pleased with his visit there. Nancy Kissinger, unfortunately, arrived in Kabul with some bug she had picked up earlier.

Q: And, likewise, Daud?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Daud and his cronies were citing that visit for many years afterward as evidence of interest of the United States in Afghanistan, to have sent such a formidable personality and Secretary of State as Kissinger.

Q: It only became less important in 1978, I guess.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right.

Q: It is June 11, 1996. We are interviewing Arnold Schifferdecker and the interviewer is Ed Dillery. Well, Arnie when we were here last we had just finished your 1973-75 stay on the Afghanistan/Pakistan affairs desk. We were talking about Secretary Kissinger and his efforts in that area. We are now moving to your next assignment that started in 1975 in the Bureau of International Organizational Affairs, as deputy director for policy planning. Could you tell us something about that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I arrived in the Bureau of International Organizations (IO) at the time the North/South dialogue was heating up quite a bit. The rhetoric had really escalated in the early mid-70s. The oil shock, the OPEC countries cutting off or restricting oil supplies

had really shaken up the West and Henry Kissinger, always one to be concerned with major events as Secretary of State, decided that he would use the North/South dialogue and a special session of the General Assembly on economic issues and justice, as the developing countries saw it, as a vehicle for trying to bring the two sides together in a cooperative mode. So, Kissinger ordered, at the time that I came into the Bureau, a series of studies and steps to be taken, policies to be initiated, that would try and entice the third world, basically the Group of 77 as it was called which was already over a 100 countries by then, to enter into a more cooperative type of interaction with the industrial countries. The Southern countries or the Group of 77 countries, though they suspected Kissinger's motives, began to see that there was some real effort behind the initiatives that the United States and that Kissinger, himself, announced at the 7th special session of General Assembly in New York in 1975.

As a result of that session, which I helped to plan, the confrontational atmosphere lightened up a great deal and a number of initiatives in the trade and financial area dealing with aid and efforts to address some of the real concerns of the Group of 77 began from that date. The effort was not to defeat OPEC or to do some sort of short term measures that would win over the Group of 77, but to try and address some of the real concerns, particularly those countries that had one crop economies or one commodity economies such as cocoa or minerals or agricultural products that because of over supply or demand changes prices would rise or fall rapidly and really crush their economies. So, as a result we began to interact more constructively, with the members of UNCTAD, which we had previously considered to be a second class forum as far as dealing with trade issues or issues involving commodities.

Q: Would you explain what UNCTAD is?

SCHIFFERDECKER: UNCTAD is the UN Commission on Trade and Development, headquartered in Geneva. It is a UN organization and in a sense it was a rival of GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs), also headquartered in Geneva, where

we preferred to do our trade negotiations, and we still do today with the successor organization the WTO (World Trade Organization). But some of the initiatives that we took to help moderate the price fluctuations through UNCTAD I think caught the imagination of the Group of 77.

This was one of the things that I worked on in the office of policy planning in IO. It was a very exciting time because previous to that Henry Kissinger had not paid a great deal of attention to the politics of the United Nations. Thereafter, he paid a great deal of attention to it and in a way forced the bureaucracy, not only in the State Department, but other agencies of the government, to pay more attention to the North/South dialogue and the Third World. Now, of course, some of what we did was rhetorical support and rhetorical in nature, but there was, as I indicated earlier, a great deal of substance to some of the initiatives.

Q: Could you define in a little more detail what your office did do? Did you actually conceive initiatives? Who did you work with? How did you present them?

SCHIFFERDECKER: When I came into the office preparations were in full swing. It was a small three-person office, actually four including a secretary. What we did was we coordinated. The IO Bureau took orders from the 7th floor, from Secretary Kissinger and his immediate deputies, to shape a new policy. We worked out new initiatives with experts in the Economics and Business Bureau (EB) as well as with other agencies in the government and the National Security Council. Basically we were getting ideas from wherever we could find them, trying to clear them through the bureaucracy and through the 7th floor of the State Department. This had to include Treasury, of course, many times AID (Agency for International Development) and the Commerce Department. Then we were shaping these ideas and putting them in Secretary Kissinger's speech. The speech, which went through more than a dozen major redrafts, was really the vehicle for devising an entirely new approach and many new policies to deal with what was viewed then as the North-South crisis.

Q: When this special session actually took place, did we give an indication to what we were up to to the other countries? What was the pre-, during, and post special session diplomacy aspect of that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Good question. We didn't telegraph our moves a lot before hand because we were busy with an internal exercise, within the US government. Therefore, when the speech came it had some impact and that was the idea. It was not a total surprise, but it had a big impact on the tone of the entire debate. Resulting out of that 7th special session, there were a series of meetings of other bodies that dealt with development. I remember particularly there was a meeting of UNCTAD in Africa and Secretary Kissinger went to that meeting and followed up on some of the initiatives that he announced in New York with more specificity and with more concrete ideas about what we wanted to do. There were other meetings and policy initiatives with many other organizations of the UN system, including the FAO, UN Development Program, UNCTAD and others. Many of the initiatives were in the field of agriculture because many G-77 countries are agriculturally dependent, so meetings took place in Rome after that. There were a couple of new subsidiary bodies created in Rome. One called IFAD (International Fund for Agricultural Development), and one of the initiatives that we announced in New York was to put money into that Fund so that more development funding in the field of agriculture and agribusiness could take place.

Q: Did you attend any of these meetings?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was not attending the meetings myself. My boss did attend some of them. I was a worker bee. The title of deputy director of policy planning was really too grandiose because it was a small office. My job was to work within the bureaucracy in Washington.

Q: So, while they were having the meetings you stayed back and when the inevitable discussions took place and requirements for changes, you were the one who worked on that again to coordinate?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, with other offices in IO and other bureaus in the Department, of course.

Q: How long did that effort with the G-77 continue?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I would say it never ended. It took off basically from that date, 1975, with some highs and lows between then and now. Development assistance probably received the largest boost through the World Bank, through the replenishments of the International Development Association of the World Bank, through UNDP, through other regional banks, the Inter-American Development Bank and other regional banks of the system. I would say the funds that we provided to these regional banks and to the World Bank and to the UNDP, as well as bilateral aid probably reached its high point sometime in the late '70s or perhaps the early '80s. Although as you know after 1980 when President Reagan came in our emphasis was more on security assistance and I would say there was probably some leveling off of our development assistance in the '80s.

Q: The development assistance both bilaterally and to multilateral financial institutions really was a big carrot for the G-77, a big part of the initiative?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very definitely. I think it was definitely needed. I don't have exact figures, but I am sure that both the absolute amount that we provided then for development assistance as well as expressed as a percentage of our GNP was considerably higher than it is today.

Q: I have just read a book which likewise I don't remember the figures, but you are exactly right. You talked about the fact that development assistance was a very important incentive for Southern countries in the dialogue, but you also mentioned that we did make

efforts to assist countries whose economy was based on one commodity. What kind of things did we do in that instance?

SCHIFFERDECKER: As I mentioned, we dealt with this in part through the UNCTAD in Geneva. Under the UNCTAD there are a number of producer associations, countries that produce some of these single commodity items that are used as ingredients in finished products such as chocolate. Cocoa is a good example. Under UNCTAD there is an association of the few producers of cocoa. I believe the Ivory Coast being one of the main ones in Africa. Although we wanted a free marketing arrangement as much as possible, as we opposed cartels per se, we had to recognize that there had to be orderly ways to market these commodities so that the price fluctuations would at least be moderated. So we worked in UNCTAD to help make arrangements, such as buffering stocks, to prevent rapid price declines or rises for these goods. I cannot go into the specific details, my recollection is not that specific, but I think we did make a sincere effort to try and deal with the problem. There were funds in fact created on which these countries could draw when their income dropped rapidly. There were low or no interest loans available to help tide them over until demand picked up. That sort of thing.

Q: When did you begin to see results from the Kissinger initiatives?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think the first result was a result in the politics. The politics, as I indicated earlier, moderated. The confrontational debate moderated a great deal. Concrete results were not immediate. Certainly the amount of development assistance from the United States picked up a great deal in the years following that, but actual results in the situation of the Southern countries probably took much longer.

Q: But you could see that the political situation had improved say by less animosity toward or opposition to US activities in regular General Assembly meetings?

SCHIFFERDECKER: On economic issues, yes, we saw a much more cooperative mode of behavior and more resolutions that we had either abstained on or voted against were

adopted by consensus following that 7th Special Session. But, on the other hand, in the General Assembly there are all of these political issues, the Middle East peace process, which hadn't even begun then, PLO representation in New York, and a lot of other political issues. We did not see, for example, a better atmosphere right away on the ground on political issues, that is progress on economic issues translating into more cooperation on political issues, than we would have liked to have seen. But, that is the nature of the United Nations and international politics.

Q: While you were in policy planning was that the only activity or were there others that are worthy of comment as well?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The main effort, the main thrust while I was there during my two years was on the economic side. That seemed to be the area that we were able to contribute more. The other issues that were being dealt with within the UN system were more or less handled by the line offices in IO and elsewhere.

Q: Because you were working on this other activity.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, and a new activity basically.

Q: Looking at the bureaucratics of it, you had just come from a regional bureau and now you are in a functional bureau for the first time, what are your feelings about the role of those two types of bureaus and how they get along with each other and how they ought to get along with each other?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I have had another tour later on in a functional bureau and I would say the regional bureaus then and even today wielded considerably more clout and their issues attracted more attention in the State Department. Although it was felt in 1975 that a functional bureau like IO was getting the attention of the Secretary of State. It was during that time as well that Daniel Patrick Moynihan was our permanent representative in New York and he, in some ways contradictory with some of Kissinger's goals, wanted

to be more bold and express our views more forcibly in multilateral fora like the United Nations. That effort also changed some results. But, as I say, there was certain inherent contradiction between trying to cooperate in the economic sphere and the sharper political rhetoric we employed during Moynihan's tenure in the UN. In fact, Moynihan resigned over alleged conflicts with Kissinger and his policy, although it never came out in public in any way. Moynihan felt that he no longer had the support of the bureaucracy in Washington when he left.

Q: We really had almost two policies toward the UN, one for economic and other issues and one for political issues, and the twain did not meet sometimes.

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think that is true. But, getting back to your question, I would say overall multilateral diplomacy I would date 1975-76, that period, as a period when multilateral diplomacy occupied more time of policy makers in Washington, more tension because it was felt there were certain things we could do multilaterally that we could not do bilaterally. And, I think that is prima facie true because many of the policies that we now pursue have to be in multilateral fora, such as trade agreements in the World Trade Organization, and other organizations, such as the IAEA and UNEP, that do a lot of technical work in the field of international relations.

Q: I know later on we are going to talk about your time at the USUN mission in New York, but as you speak it reminds me that here we have several forces in the government involved in our relations with multilateral organizations. You have the Secretary, himself, the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations, the representative to the UN in New York, and then a whole bunch of sort of semi-autonomous guys in Vienna for the IAEA and in Geneva for those organizations. Not so much coordination within regional offices, but how about coordination within the offices within the US government which dealt with international diplomacy, how did that work during that 1975-77 period?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It worked surprisingly smoothly in part because people perceived Secretary Kissinger as a strong Secretary of State, a strong leader, one who would be able to take disputes within the bureaucracy to the White House and win. So cooperation was surprisingly smooth and not difficult. Complex occasionally. There are always organizations within the US government who want to have their fingerprints on the policy and their input, so time consuming. But, I would say overall, coordination of our policy in multilateral organizations was considerably smoother and less complex than it is today.

Q: I ask that question with an ulterior motive because you mentioned that Moynihan resigned when he felt that he had lost the confidence of the Secretary. My experience has been that when the Secretary of State, Al Haig, lost the confidence of the representative to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick, he resigned.

Let's move to your next assignment. After two years in IO you moved over to the Environmental Protection Agency. What was your status there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I had a friend in the Foreign Service who had worked in the Office of International Activities in EPA and really enjoyed the work. I was looking for one more assignment in Washington before I went abroad and thought that it might be interesting and worthwhile to work in the environmental field. I had always supported environmental protection goals in the United States as many Americans did back then. In fact, it was hard to find anyone who did not support environmental protection in earlier days and we should recall that it was frequently under the Republicans that much of our environmental progress was made. Under President Nixon EPA was created and other environmental organizations in the early '70s. So, it wasn't that old or established a field when I went to EPA. There was a staff in EPA' international office of approximately 20-25 professionals dealing with various aspects of international environmental cooperation. I came to that two year assignment determined to see what I could do and learn more about the environmental field. I had a very productive two years.

Q: What kinds of things did you do?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was hired to take over bilateral issues with Canada and Mexico, and to some extent with a few other countries that we dealt with. Canada at that time was accusing the United States of poisoning the Great Lakes. We, of course, felt that we had a higher degree of environmental protection on our industry than did Canada. But, there were many arguments. On the Mexican side it was much as it still is today, that is the Mexicans claim that they cannot afford or did not have the enforcement capacity to put controls on industry, particularly along the border with the United States, along the Rio Grande. We had programs to develop cooperation with the Mexicans and with Canada.

One of the issues, as I indicated, was the water quality of the Great Lakes. With the State Department and other agencies in Washington we developed a team of negotiators to work out an agreement on Great Lakes water quality, getting. commitments by both sides to end discharging pollutants into the Great Lakes and to try to rehabilitate areas that had been polluted on both sides.

The other main issue we had with Canada was air quality. There were some agreements for particular areas where there had been some deterioration of air quality such as in the Detroit airshed with Windsor Canada and in the Pacific Northwest, but no overall agreement. As a result of initial efforts that we undertook when I was there, we eventually developed an agreement many years later to reduce the level of acid rain and its pollutants which came from sulfur dioxide primarily, to put more controls on both US and Canadian coal fired power plants and steel plants, etc., so that the level of acid rain in both countries have diminished considerably.

On the Mexican side we were almost starting from scratch. We had a huge problem of pollution from Tijuana into the Pacific Ocean which contaminated beaches in San Diego and areas on both sides. One of the big projects that the U.S. started was to build a sewage treatment plant to treat municipal sewage from Mexico as well as California,

so that both cities (San Diego and Tijuana) would have at least primary and secondary treatment of municipal wastes. That was one big agreement and there were others that have been achieved since then with Mexico and with Canada. By the way, the municipal treatment project is still being built as we speak (in 1997).

Q: When the agreements were finally achieved, did you work on legislation that would implement these treaties?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That is a good question. Of course we didn't make any commitments that we were not authorized to make in legislation. But, the fact is we were ahead of both countries in having legislation on the books, so we were able to basically work in tandem with legislation that was being passed or had already been passed by the Congress and signed into law, to form the US commitment and then try and get both Canada and Mexico to undertake similar legislative initiatives so that they could enforce their sides of the agreements.

Q: We definitely were in the lead on the legislative side at that point. Did you work closely with Congress on this?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, we kept specific committees or subcommittees and individual members of congress briefed on what we were doing and frequently we were asked to brief. For example, Congressman Oberstar of Minnesota who was very much concerned about the pollution in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area of northern Minnesota on measures we were taking to prevent pollution in that particular area. We also briefed congressmen and senators from other border states, such as Maine, Vermont and also from the Pacific northwest and Texas, to make sure we were in tune with what they would like to see happening in their particular states and trans-boundary areas.

Q: How did you handle being a State Department person in another agency with probably some inevitable conflicts with the State Department?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That was an interesting aspect of my work. I developed fairly close and productive relationships with the Mexico desk and with the Canadian affairs office in State. I even attended the staff meetings of the Canadian affairs office, headed by the deputy assistant secretary, Richard Vine, at the time. His weekly meetings I attended so that we would always be more or less in touch with each other. There were a few conflicts but primarily they were conflicts of control. State wanted control and EPA would have liked to have taken over many of the negotiating functions that State had held tightly onto. Of course, being in the Environmental Protection Agency I could see the merits of EPA's arguments but very little ground was given by State during my tenure in EPA. For the most part we worked very harmoniously together. On the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, for example, the deputy administrator of EPA, Barbara Blum, wanted to head the US delegation to Ottawa to sign the agreement, but Secretary of State Cyrus Vance was the one who actually signed the agreement. He did not make a speech, but I drafted remarks for Ms. Blum so that she would be able to deliver a speech on behalf of EPA at the meeting and everything worked very well.

Q: How did your colleagues at EPA view you? Were you an outsider with questionable loyalty to the organization? How did you handle that part of the job?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was amazing how easily they accepted me and others from State. There were two other officers from the State Department at the same time working on other issues, primarily multilateral ones dealing with the OECD and a bilateral agreement with Russia. But, the technical offices of EPA, the offices of water, air, toxic substances, wastes, they were all very practical minded people and we worked very smoothly together. I found very little conflict, very little suspicion. Most of those officers had people who were interested in international cooperation, very dedicated people. They also enjoyed the negotiating sessions and the trips to Canada and to Mexico.

Q: What was your evaluation of exchange assignments for you personally and as a general rule for the Foreign Service?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Some officers in the State Department eschewed assignments to other agencies feeling that they were not the kind of jobs that would help them earn promotions and advance in the Foreign Service. As a matter of fact I was promoted very shortly after my two year detail to EPA and I felt like I got more experience actually negotiating agreements in EPA than I had up to that time working in the State Department.

Q: So, therefore, a good thing you would say?

SCHIFFERDECKER: A very good experience for me. It helped to prepare me and qualify me for a job in environmental affairs later on in the OES bureau.

Q: That brings us up to 1979 and then you go to Ankara. You haven't had Turkish language at this point?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, I hadn't so I took a ten-month intensive Turkish training course at the Foreign Service Institute. When I left EPA in 1979 I spent almost a year in preparation for my assignment to Turkey from 1980-83.

Q: How did that assignment come about? Was it a bidding situation or did someone approach you?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Up to this time I hadn't focused a lot on my career or careerism issues, but I needed to go overseas by this time, having been in the States since 1973. How I got the job in Turkey was that the incumbent in the job in the political section in Ankara, Robert Peck, had to leave a year early because he was under a security threat. So, the job came open a little bit off cycle and through contact with somebody in the Bureau of Personnel, I was able to put my bid in for this assignment and it happened very quickly.

Q: What did you think about the Turkish language program?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was an excellent language program. The language programs and area studies were integrated into the same time frame so one day a week out of the five workdays was devoted to area studies and the other four days to language training. I ended up after the ten months with a 3+/3 in Turkish and with a pretty good grounding and updating in American/Turkish and regional affairs. So, I am very high on the training at FSI.

Q: Did your previous language help you at all?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I had a smattering of Turkish when I was in Istanbul as a junior officer but had forgotten much of it. I had never really mastered the grammar very well. Turkish has a rather convoluted grammar by our standards so it took some effort.

Q: Isn't the normal Turkish program longer than ten months?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, that was the normal time and I believe it still is today.

Q: When did you arrive in Ankara?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I arrived in July, 1980, about two months before the military takeover in Turkey. At that time there was considerable anarchy between leftist and rightist groups in Turkey. You were country director at that time.

Q: Yes.

SCHIFFERDECKER: The most frequent clashes and terrorist incidents between the extreme left and right were taking place primarily in Istanbul and the larger cities, but also in some of the cities where there were Sunni and Shia populations living together. Ankara was not so bedeviled by these incidents, although there were some shootings and

bombings. There were frequent demonstrations and the general atmosphere was one of instability when my family and I arrived, so we were wondering what we were getting into.

[End Tape 2, Side B]

Q: What was your particular job in the political section in Ankara?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was the number two in the political section to Dan Newberry, who later became consul general in Istanbul. For a while I was acting political counselor, but we had a replacement for Newberry who came from the Arab world, Mr. Jay Freres.

Q: How many people were there in the section?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We had a rather large political section which included the political/ military people. About the time I arrived, political-military affairs became a separate section.

Q: So, as the number two in the section, did you have a specific area or were you a real deputy and were across the board?

SCHIFFERDECKER: My primary work when I was assigned for those three years was domestic political issues, but much of the time I was asked to supervise other officers, including two junior officers. You ask the number, as I recall now we had a total of seven when I was there: two junior officers, one under me who did international issues and foreign policy issues, and the other one did primarily domestic issues. So, we had a rather well staffed section with two Foreign Service National employees who supported us. We also had a labor reporting officer in our section and a labor reporting Foreign Service National, so we had three FSNs assigned to our section as well as seven officers.

Q: What were the living conditions like and how did the security situation affect you and your family?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I arrived with my wife, who had never been overseas with me, as I had recently remarried, and two stepchildren. They didn't know what they were getting into. So, I concentrated a great deal in getting my family settled in, as all Foreign Service officers do, and getting them set up in schools. Things went very smoothly. Ankara did not seem to be as affected by the political terrorism that was going on, which wasn't in any case particularly aimed at the United States, although the US was under a lot of rhetorical attacks by the left. However, I mentioned earlier that one of our officers, the one I replaced, had been under a possible terrorist threat, so Americans were not exempt. There was an American military officer who had been shot in Istanbul several months before I arrived. So, we were on our guard, were well briefed on security matters. We were a little bit fearful I have to admit coming into the situation. US and Turkish military cooperation continued as it had for many years earlier. However, we had only recently gone through the period where much of the military cooperation had stopped, because of the embargo that we placed on Turkey as a result of Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974. This was 1980 and we had just entered into a new agreement to lift the embargo and reopen the Turkish/American bases under Turkish sovereignty and to resume military assistance. I believe you were in large part responsible for that being restarted, getting Congress to go along with it.

Q: That was a very interesting period with the clear requirement to have a good relationship with Turkey because of NATO reasons and the problems that were occasioned by the Cyprus problem.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Because this military cooperation had resumed, the left in Turkey was very incensed, wanting Turkey to be neutral or even handed between Moscow and Washington, this was precisely the reason that Americans were living under something of a cloud in Turkey.

Q: How did your brand new family, on their first tour, do?

SCHIFFERDECKER: As I mentioned things went smoother than we might have imagined and only two months after we arrived the Turkish military took over the reins of government, crushed at least temporarily the left, arrested many people and terrorism was effectively ended. It was the most tranquil period that one could imagine in terms of living in that country during that period. I might also mention that the Turkish military intervention and takeover of the government on September 12, 1980 was one of the most popular military coups I have ever heard of. People were absolutely celebrating this event because they had been afraid to go out of their houses and apartments at night due to the near anarchy. Even in Ankara, where I lived, night life was virtually non-existent and restaurants had suffered tremendously because people were afraid of street attacks, demonstrations or things that might threaten them. So, they celebrated as soon as the military curfew ended a day or two after the coup by going out, filling all the restaurants, night clubs, tea houses, etc. all over the country. It was a tremendous sight to see and experience to have to see how popular a military regime could be.

Q: I always have the feeling that we almost always define the consent of the governed in our terms. We think you need votes, etc., but there are occasion that you can see that the people are willing to accept for some reason a different kind of power structure.

SCHIFFERDECKER: The Turkish military kept their promises. They occupied government for a little over three years and that is about all. They turned the government over to civilian control and held elections after developing a new constitution and a little bit more muscular administration than had existed before. The problem had been that the main two parties in Turkey had developed such an antipathy towards each other that they were unable to cooperate and gridlock occurred in the government and when there was no governmental solution to the problems of the country, the military took over.

Q: Your time working on domestic issues must have been very interesting during that time. What were the main trends besides what you have just said?

SCHIFFERDECKER: After the military takeover, the job became more difficult because there were no politics per se. There was no parliamentary politics, only the politics of the Turkish bureaucracy and their military masters existed so that our job was made considerably more difficult because our contacts with the military were limited to military cooperation. The generals did not confide in us on their intentions and progress in reforming the political side of the equation, so we were somewhat hampered in our reporting. However, as in many countries, it doesn't take long for politics to reassert itself and many of the former politicians and through family ties, etc., and through the connections that we had in the bureaucracy we were able to get a much better sense of how things were going and we were also able to access some of the decision making centers in the military, so that we had a pretty good handle on what they were doing and in what direction they were heading. In foreign policy, the Foreign Office never ceased to operate and with the same people basically. The Foreign Minister, Ilter Turkmen, was a career Turkish diplomat.

Q: You mentioned before when we were talking about Kabul that you were in with the people all the time, did you notice a difference in being a junior political officer and a senior political officer, or did you do the same kind of things?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Inevitably there were some differences, in part due to my own age and my position. The two societies, the one in Afghanistan and the one I encountered in Turkey, were quite different in many ways. The level of education of Turks was considerably higher. I would say that there was a broader array of Turks that I could deal with and I did a considerable amount of traveling within the country as political officer in Ankara. We were expected to travel all over the area that we supervised, our consular district, and also traveled to other consular districts either while on vacation or while working to talk to people and decision makers. For example, I went to Istanbul a number of times. I had been there before and knew a number of people there and had many Turkish friends. Many of the people I dealt with initially when I arrived were journalists because

they were the ones who would be the most talkative and the most interested in sharing information, so I made friends with quite a few Turkish journalists, and some of those were in Istanbul.

Q: You were able to keep those relations up even while you were in Ankara?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very much.

Q: What did you think of the Turkish press?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very unbridled and sometimes undisciplined, but very competent too. There are quite a number of Turkish newspapers, very colorful printing in Technicolor all over the front pages and other sections of their newspapers. They vary in degree of responsibility from scurrilously yellow journalism to fairly responsible reporting. One of the newspapers that we thought was the best was a former leftist paper which became much more centrist after the military took over, that's Cumhuriyet, the newspaper published out of Istanbul which was the least colorful, more like the New York Times in appearance than the Daily News. Its journalists were quite well-educated, competent and responsible. As I say their politics shifted somewhat to the center of the political spectrum after the military takeover. Their diplomatic reporter in Ankara and I became very good friends. I believe he is still working as a journalist in Turkey. Some of the other foreign affairs correspondents who were either in Ankara or Istanbul or traveled a good bit were people that I liked to talk to from time to time. We developed relationships where they would not ask me certain things or expect me to give them certain information but were able to share some insights with me on domestic issues where presumably I was less well plugged in than they and I would be able to give them more insights on US foreign policy or official bilateral relations with Turkey, areas that I was able to talk about.

Q: One of the big policy issues, at least for the United States, if not for Turkey itself, was its relationship with Greece. What was that like during this period?

SCHIFFERDECKER: After the military takeover things were fairly quiet with Greece. It was clear that the Turkish generals did not want any confrontation with Greece or to take any new initiatives on Cyprus or anything that would upset Turkish-Greek relations while they were reforming the domestic politics of Turkey. There were, of course, the same issues between Greece and Turkey on Cyprus and the disputes over the Aegean and whether or not the Aegean zones of economic activity were Greek or Turkish, depending on whether you were talking about extending out from the mainland or from Greek islands. The Greeks wanted to insist that each island had its own territorial sea and exclusive economic zone. The finishing touches were put on the Law of the Sea in 1981 and as it turned out because of the Reagan Administration''s concerns about sharing of the economic wealth of the sea did not subscribe to all of the Law of the Sea agreement's provisions. As a result we found ourselves very much in harmony with Turkish policy, which was also not to sign the Law of the Sea agreement because of their reservations about Greek claims and islands having the right to claim not only territorial seas but economic zones. That was one of the issues that animated Greek/Turkish relations while I was there. But, there were no hot disputes in the Aegean as occurred recently where some Turks occupied a small island right off the coast of Turkey that the Greeks claimed was theirs. Incidents like that were fairly minimal. Cyprus was the main issue.

Q: How was our relationship with the Turks in Turkey about Cyprus?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We were primarily trying in Ankara to promote a flexible approach by the Turkish Cypriots and by Turkey to resolve the Cyprus problem. We had a special mediator, Reg Bartholomew at the time, who was trying to see if there was a basis for a settlement in Cyprus and we are still trying almost 16 years later.

Q: And we have more mediators.

SCHIFFERDECKER: We have had a parade of mediators since then and we have one right now, a presidential envoy, Mr. Beattie...

Q: And the Special Cyprus Coordinator.

SCHIFFERDECKER: And the Special Cyprus Coordinator, Ambassador Williams, who worked for you I believe.

Q: Yes, that is right.

SCHIFFERDECKER: In any case, because we had a special mediator we did not play a leading role in trying to hammer out terms of reference or positions on Cyprus, although we were asked to make demarches from time to time to the Foreign Ministry. One of the foreign policy issues I dealt with was this one when I was acting political counselor and I got to know the Cyprus director in the Foreign Ministry quite well. He genuinely seemed interested in an agreement on Cyprus, but, of course, toed the Turkish nationalistic line which was that there had to be a bizonal confederation style of government before Turkey and the Turkish Cypriots would agree to settle and before Turkish troops would even think about evacuating from Cyprus.

Q: What kind of pressure did the Turks impose on us? Did they feel we were pro-Greek Cypriot in this issue?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think the Turks were relatively satisfied with our posture which was that we wanted an agreement that everybody could live with and that we were not putting undue pressure on them. You have to remember that at this time in the early '80s we were trying to build up Turkey defensively, enhance our security relations, increase the amount of our military assistance and economic assistance as well during these early Reagan years. Turkey was a big part of our strategy to try and develop a stronger military posture vis-a-vis the Soviet Union which only a year or two earlier had invaded Afghanistan and had made other moves which were interpreted by the Administration as being a bit too bellicose for comfort. So, Turkey being a big part of our strategy was not under strong US pressure to make settlements on other issues such as Cyprus even though we recognized

this as an important issue and one that we wanted to see resolved because the issue was basically between two NATO members. But the Turks did pressure us or did feel that we were being unfair to them by providing military assistance to them on a ratio with Greece, the famous 7 to 10 ratio, which I am sure you are very familiar with having been director of Turkish/Greek and Cypriot affairs at the time.

Q: That is right. The 7 to 10, which still exists by the way, is ...

SCHIFFERDECKER: This is Senator Sarbanes' legacy.

Q: That's right, it still is in effect. Another sensitive issue that has some impact on domestic politics in the United States is the Armenian question, the suggestion of all the terrible things the Turks did in World War I. During this time there were attacks on Turkish diplomats in the United States as well as elsewhere. How did that impact on your work in Ankara?

SCHIFFERDECKER: This was a very sensitive issue, as you know, for the Turks and the Turkish government. One of their major foreign policy efforts was to try and gain support for their view that Turkey should not be brought before the court of world opinion or be forced to suffer by attacks on their diplomats because of something that happened during the Ottoman Empire right in the period before World War I and during World War I. The Turks were very emphatic to us in Ankara during my time there that they didn't want the Holocaust Museum, which was being constructed in Washington, to deal with the alleged Turkish massacre or Turkish genocide against Armenians in eastern Turkey during this period of 1915-19. They felt so strongly about this that the ambassador and others were frequently called to the Foreign Ministry or the Turkish embassy in Washington went in to see you and others in the State Department to try and insure that the United States did not join in this Armenian publicity campaign to force the Turks either to admit that they had committed genocide or for reparations, or for whatever. I know that many Turks felt at the time I was there that although atrocities may have been committed they genuinely felt that

Turkey had been stabbed in the back by the Armenians at a time when they were about to go under as a nation state and that atrocities were also committed against Turks in eastern Turkey.

Q: So, it was something they felt very strongly about and was murky at best.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very much so. Of course, we were also witnessing in 1981-82 the beginning of a campaign against Kurdish extremists, which is a contemporary issue of alleged Turkish atrocities against civilian populations in southeastern Turkey. These are very difficult issues that the Turks have been dealing with for a long time. However, it should be noted that there are many Kurdish ethnic Turks living all over Turkey, they don't just live in the southeast. Many of them migrated for jobs and a better way of life out of eastern Turkey into the big cities and into the western parts of Turkey. Many of them would like to see the problem of Kurdish separatism go away so that they can get on with their lives. But, the Turks have never taken kindly to efforts by Kurds to have a measure of autonomy or even to be able to use their own language in the schools, etc. The Turks, since the time of Ataturk, have sought to build the country around the idea of Turkish ethnic language, institutions and to downplay separatism. Of course, this is a problem that exists in many other countries since the end of the Cold War.

Q: Changing the subject slightly, were there any notable visits by senior Americans during this time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We had numerous visits by State Department officials. We had a visit by Secretary Alexander Haig during my time there. The emphasis was very much on building the bilateral relationship for purposes of NATO solidarity and solidarity against the Soviet Union. We did not have a presidential or vice presidential visit during my time, although we have had subsequently. Part of the reason for this, perhaps was that during almost my whole time there Turkey was under a military regime and I think it was felt that it would be better to send officials at more of a working level, although the Secretary of

State visit is not considered just a working level visit and the Turks were very receptive, of course, to just about any official attention from Washington, including the Congress.

Q: Who was your ambassador and are there any anecdotes about him?

SCHIFFERDECKER: When I arrived Jim Spain was ambassador. However, his tenure was cut short by the election of President Reagan and the assignment of Robert Strausz-Hup# as ambassador shortly after the Reagan Administration took office. Ambassador Strausz-Hup# was focused on the strategic picture, the big picture most of the time and on enhancing the value of the Turks and the Turkish military in support of US security policy in the southern flank of NATO.

Q: This is Arnie's interview but I must tell one anecdote and that was while I was the director of the office for southern European affairs, I actually stayed with Ambassador Strausz-Hup# one time and he was a rather elderly man at that time, at least in his late '70s and he still played tennis.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Early '80s.

Q: I became his doubles partner and found that he really was still pretty good but did not move much. He took one corner of the court and I was expected to cover all the rest. Your labor attach# was his usual partner, but he really enjoyed that day I took his place.

SCHIFFERDECKER: He made you run around a good bit. I used to play with the ambassador. He would have his staff assistant ask around the embassy for people who would like to play. Some people preferred to be busy but others felt that they ought to take advantage of this invitation. So, occasionally we would play. We learned that if we were going to hit the ball to the ambassador's side of the court to try to hit it to him, and he did a pretty good job. He retrieved a few balls that were not close to him, but as you said, generally he was fairly stationary on his side of the court and expected his partner to make up a lot more ground.

Q: If I am like that at 80 I will be very happy. Okay, we are into 1983 and time for another assignment. What happened to you next?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I was interested in having my own show, if possible and there were a number of principal officer jobs on the bid list in 1983 when I was looking for a new job. I had been on home leave the year before I submitted my bid and talked to my personnel counselor. He looked at my record, at my previous assignments and felt that I was qualified for such a job. He encouraged me to bid on the job in Lahore as consul general, which I did. I found out later that there were 46 others who had bid on that job, a big surprise to me, I had no idea that many people would bid on the job. About 20 were viable bidders, at grade and with the right amount of experience that was wanted for that job. So, I was very lucky to get the job and I owe it all to my personnel counselor and some friends in the Near East Bureau, including the late Arnie Raphel, who was deputy assistant secretary for Near East Affairs. So, getting a principal officer job or an ambassadorship takes a lot of groundwork and preparation even though all of the assignments are supposedly made on the basis of open assignments and purely on merit.

Q: Well, in this case it appears that merit had some impact on the situation because clearly you were qualified both by language ability and experience in the region, etc. So, it sounds to me it was more than luck.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, thank you.

Q: Did you have to refresh your language?

SCHIFFERDECKER: This was not a language designated position. Urdu being the language of Pakistan was not deemed to be essential because Pakistan had been part of British India and most educated Pakistanis spoke English. But, as soon as I arrived in Lahore I began studying Urdu because I wanted to be able to interact with those people who did not speak English. I spent an hour every day of my whole three years there in the

morning before I went to work studying Urdu. It is a difficult language but there are a lot of Turkish words in Urdu because Urdu is a made-up language. It is a combination of Hindi and the language spoken in the military camps, Urdu being the Turkish word meaning army. It was the language of the army back during the Mughal period when they hired many mercenaries, some of whom came from Turkey and they used Turkish officers to man their armies. So, that is how the language arose. Much of it is Sanskrit or Hindi origin but there are many homonyms in Turkish in Urdu. So, that helped me a little bit on the vocabulary side.

Q: What do you think about those old one hour language programs that are being phased out a bit? I had it in Japanese and found it was quite useful. Do you share that view?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think that it is unfortunate if they have been curtailed. I wasn't aware of that. I think they are absolutely vital to enable one to have at least a polite command of the language which can be very important and useful for any officer, not just an ambassador, political officer, consul general, but for everybody at a post including secretaries. I think the program should be restored as soon as possible.

Q: How proficient did you get?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I could bargain for carpets, could speak a few words at gatherings when asked to say a few words, especially at gatherings where people were not as well educated as most Pakistanis. I can't say I was able to speak in complex sentences or deal with complicated issues, but I certainly was applauded by many of the people I dealt with for having taken the trouble to learn some of their language.

Q: On the personal side, you mentioned the situation when you and your family arrived in Ankara and the tensions of the period, what was Lahore like in that regard?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Lahore was one of three constituent posts, the other two being Karachi and Peshawar, working under the direction of the embassy in Islamabad. This

period, 1983-86, was the height of the effort by the United States to support the Afghan mujahideen against the Russian occupation of Afghanistan. Even in Lahore which is somewhat removed from the frontier with Afghanistan we could feel the impact of our policy which was to use Pakistan as the conduit for our aiding the mujahideen and in order to secure that cooperation by bringing more economic and military support to the government and people of Pakistan. So when I arrived in Lahore we had a very small consulate staff of eight people, plus two Drug Enforcement Agency agents, one AID liaison officer and three USIS officers. We had a rather large cultural program because Lahore is the cultural capital of Pakistan. We went from those numbers which I believe totaled 13 or 14, to almost 50 Americans as a result of the increase of our AID program in Pakistan. We had a number of projects that were just on the drawing boards when I arrived and were beginning to come to fruition by bringing in many, many AID contractors. They were not direct hire AID personnel, but contractors working on electrical power, health and a few other programs. So, I became responsible for the welfare and the security...we did have some security problems in Pakistan...of over 50 Americans before I left.

Q: And your own family?

SCHIFFERDECKER: This was a post where one's family could accompany, so my own family came with me. My stepson had graduated but my stepdaughter was still with us and went to the American School in Lahore. We had a very fine American School with a number of third country national students but two-thirds of the students were children of the highly educated Pakistanis who wanted their children to study in American schools and eventually go to American universities.

As I mentioned we did have a security threat there. The government was headed by the martial law administration, another military government for me, of President Zia ul-Haq. He had his opponents in the country and some were imprisoned. There was a terrorist group named Al Zulfikar, named after Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the previous prime minister who had been ousted and later executed. The Al Zulfikar group was looking for a way to embarrass

or assassinate either Pakistani government officials or their primary supporters, which was the United States. Shortly after I arrived we discovered that the Al Zulfikar group had targeted me for assassination. At that time we did not have a high degree of security at the office building, the consulate, and only a nominal guard at the gate of my residence. We learned that there was to have been an attempt by three Pakistanis who supported this terrorist group, armed with guns, hand grenades and other weapons, and that they had been discovered only the night before they were to make the hit. Two were arrested and one escaped. As soon as this was learned by friends of the consulate, I was asked to leave the country for a couple of weeks until an armored car could be sent to me from the United States and better security arrangements made. It being nearly Christmas holiday season, I went on a two-week Christmas holiday and when I came back we had a fully armored car and I felt much safer. We also for a while had a chase car by the Punjab security force which was cooperating with us for a couple of months until we felt the situation was safer.

Q: So, it was a fairly tense time for you and your family.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, I thought here we go again.

Q: And even disconcerting when you are the target?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes. I think they viewed the American consul general as the easiest of several targets that they had under consideration. One of them was a cousin of the President who lived in Lahore and another was the Governor of the Punjab who was an ex-military general. They felt that my security was the easiest to penetrate but fortunately the plot was discovered in the nick of time.

Q: For the benefit of those who don't know exactly where Lahore is in location within the country...?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, Lahore is the capital of Punjab province which is the most populous province of the country, over 60 million people, and is located only about 17 miles from the Indian border, from Indian Punjab. During the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, the Punjab was divided up as well as part of Kashmir up in northern Pakistan between India and Pakistan. It was where the fighting basically ended. There is a river, one of the five rivers of the Punjab that demarcates part of the border between Pakistan and India. So, Lahore is situated in that area, about 220 miles south of Islamabad.

Q: Are there regional political problems bringing domestic political reporting into play once again?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, Punjabi politics dominated the national politics then as well as today. Since there was a military government in power, they seem to follow me around, much of the politics was taking place in the provinces and the embassy very much relied on the reporting that they had from Consulate General Lahore to provide an idea of what the politics were at any given time. Shortly after I arrived the first elections were held. They were non party elections for an advisory assembly which was deemed to be partly a show by the military government and not a fully free election, although it was a fairly highly contested and as far as we could see a free election. So, politics began to get active while I was there and I was acquainted with most of the major players in Punjab. Of course, there were a number of major players also from Sindh province and its capital, Karachi. My deputy and political officer and I were privileged in Lahore to be acquainted with many of the movers and shakers as politics resumed in Pakistan, including the current Prime Minister.

Q: Do you feel that consulates can play a unique role in political reporting?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Definitely, and I believe that is why we haven't closed any posts in Pakistan because of the unsettled nature of politics in that region, the instability, the problems between India and Pakistan, the problem of nuclear proliferation, the unsettled

situation in Afghanistan. When instabilities rear their head in a country it is very important to have constituent posts. I think that is one reason why we have perhaps retired more consular posts in Europe where politics are more settled than we have in some third world countries.

Q: Any other thoughts or anecdotes about the Lahore experience?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, I would like to say one thing about the role of consulates in promoting American business and trade. It is often alleged that the State Department has been derelict in its duty, at least in the past, to promote American business. I think that is a bum rap that, as far as I know, never existed even back in the '60s when I first started out in the Foreign Service in Turkey. We paid a lot of attention to trade promotion and the American business community in helping them to find markets and investment opportunities and that sort of thing. We made a major push when I was in Lahore, which is second only to Karachi in the amount of business that was being done. Plus we had the electrical power authority located in Lahore which let many contracts and had a number of American firms bidding on contracts during my time there. One of the things I did was to help lobby on behalf of American firms, to promote the selection of American firms to supply goods and services for contracts let by the government or in some cases private joint ventures. I do remember helping the Cargill Corporation, a major agribusiness company in the United States, based in Minnesota, to set up some of its first joint ventures in agribusiness—One an orange juice concentrate business in my consular district, a livestock feed business and a seed production business in the country. There were other companies as well. I calculated that before I left during my three years that we had at least helped and supported several hundred million dollars worth of business for American firms, either trade, investment or contracts on projects in the country. I felt that this was one of my major contributions to the furtherance of US interests in Pakistan.

Q: Calls to mind the recent article by Thomas Littmann in the "Washington Post" about the decline of resources for foreign affairs. Did you see that article?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I did and I think it was a very timely piece and pointed out that there is a price to be paid for hollowing the Foreign Service, especially the State Department which does a lot of valuable work for the United States not only in the political, security areas, but also in the economic/commercial field.

Q: What were the relations between Pakistan and India during this time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Relations were on the whole poor but they did not deteriorate seriously during my three years there. India, of course, did not support our effort to oust the Russians from Afghanistan and was very concerned that Pakistan was building up its military capacity through United States military assistance, primarily providing the F-16 aircraft to Pakistan while I was there. So India was watching this with growing concern. There were, however, during this time two years when there was a military buildup along the border very close to Lahore on the Indian side which the Indians attributed to their annual exercises during the dry season in the Punjab. Tensions mounted twice during this period and I was lucky to be close enough to the border to view some of the buildup on the Pakistani side. We took off the Muslim Sabbath, Friday, and Saturday at that time as our weekend. I used to go horseback riding on Fridays outside of Lahore in an area not too far from the border and was able to see the Pakistani tanks and artillery deployed along the border. It always looked a little bit threatening to see these tanks camouflaged and dug in as though they were ready to repel an invasion or maybe even start one of their own. So, I was able to report on what I was able to see along the border. Fortunately nothing ever broke out that threatened the peace between the two countries.

Q: Was there an Indian consulate general in Lahore?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes there was. It was very closely regulated by Pakistan and limited to facilitating visits by Indian nationals to Sikh shrines which are located in Lahore. There was no political presence per se.

Q: Did you have any relations with them?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Oh, yes. There were some consular agents of other countries in Lahore. There was an Iranian mission, a British Council, a German consular agent and an Italian agent. There wasn't a large consular presence in Lahore.

Q: Did you find any use at all in there being a consular corps?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Definitely. We kept in close touch and traded war stories and obtained information about what was going on within the government from our colleagues.

Q: Did your previous experience in Afghanistan come into play?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I did not participate in the US effort, except very indirectly, to build up Pakistan and the effort against the Russians. However, there was an Afghan refugee camp in Punjab which I visited twice and was able to talk to some of the refugees and express our concerns and find out what problems existed, and talk to some of the voluntary agencies that were helping the refugees.

Q: How about your relationship with the embassy and your ambassador and the general relationship of constituent post to an embassy?

SCHIFFERDECKER: When I arrived Ron Spiers was the ambassador but he left after a couple of months and was replace by Deane Hinton. Deane Hinton, career ambassador, made it clear when he came that he wanted the constituent posts to be free to report their political and economic developments directly without being filtered through the embassy. At the same time, he wanted to keep in close touch himself personally with all of the constituent posts, which he visited frequently. On a monthly basis I usually attended country team meetings in Islamabad. So, we were very well clued in and plugged in to the embassy. At the same time we had considerable freedom to do our political and economic

reporting as we saw fit and in accordance with our own reporting plan. So, it was the best of both worlds really. We had good coordination with the embassy but a lot of freedom.

Q: Did you have any direct relationship with any of the individual sections within the embassy?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes. We made sure that the political and economic counselors and their staffs were welcome to visit us and travel with us in the province so that they could see for themselves and get a better sense of what was going on.

Q: And did they do that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very much so. The political counselor, John Wolf, made a number of visits with me around the province as well as some of his officers.

Q: How about the military attach#s? Did you have a relationship with them or did you have your own military presence?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, we didn't have a military presence. We had one of the major units of the army in the Lahore cantonment and we did have a visit once or twice by the Defense or Army attach#, but I think they were restricted from official contact outside of the capital, which was unfortunate. Occasionally I made calls directly on the military commander in Lahore as well as many calls on the governor, who was a just retired Lt. General, so I had a pretty good sense of what was going on with the military personally and kept our military colleagues at the embassy informed about what I knew was going on.

Q: Any other final thoughts about Lahore?

SCHIFFERDECKER: One of the best assignments I had in the Foreign Service, if not the best, at least in the overseas setting. I thought it was an exciting time. Aside from the security problem that I had early on, I felt that I was well plugged in to the country and to its leaders, including even the president who came down to Lahore frequently and some of

the ministers. It was a very productive assignment and one that got me promoted into the Senior Foreign Service.

Q: A good thing in itself. You were there for three years and in 1986 moving on to Rabat. How did that come about?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It happened through the bidding process and a little bit of lobbying on my part. My family seemed interested in going to Morocco. The job attracted me. It was not necessarily a move up but it was a good substantive job being political counselor in another Muslim country. I had the French language necessary for the job, although I didn't have Arabic which would have been equally if not more helpful in some settings. I heard after I arrived that the ambassador had reservations about me because he felt having been a principal officer I might consider it a bit of a comedown to be political counselor in his embassy. I assured him when I arrived that I didn't consider it so.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The ambassador was Tom Nassif, a political appointee who had been a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs in the Department before he took this job.

Q: Was he there during most of your time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Almost all of it except for the last seven months when he was replaced by Michael Ussery, another political appointee. Morocco seems to get political appointees or attract them. Apparently the King of Morocco, King Hassan, likes to have ambassadors from the United States who are plugged into the political apparatus in Washington, not necessarily professional diplomats.

Q: There have been a number of them and, of course, it is a very pleasant place to be.

SCHIFFERDECKER: It is a very pleasant country, a very beautiful country. It is very well set up for tourism, very tightly controlled, a little more orderly than some countries, although they have had some very brief bouts of violence and political instability.

Q: I assume this time the move was relatively easy and there were not security problems?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We hardly had any major security concerns during my whole time there, for a change. My wife and stepdaughter were with me again. Rabat had an American School and ample opportunities for family recreation including riding, which I had become very fond of after assignments in both Turkey and Pakistan. One of my family's criteria for assignment was that there be access to stables and riding.

Q: So, living conditions in Rabat were pretty comfortable?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, they were very comfortable. Rabat is right on the Atlantic coast and has a very pleasant climate. It has good facilities for tourism and visitors.

Q: What were the relations like between the United States and Morocco at that time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They were very close. We always have been close to the Moroccans for their moderation in Middle East politics and support of accommodation with Israel. King Hassan had made several moves in that direction, both before and during my time there. We have, and still maintain, a small military assistance program, primarily training of Moroccan officers in the United States. There was some talk of expanding military cooperation with Morocco while I was there but for one reason or another it did not change greatly during my three years there.

Q: You were in charge of all aspects of political reporting—domestic and international?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes.

Q: Is there any domestic politics in Morocco?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, but quite different from the kind of domestic politics I was used to seeing where it was more wide open and more openly contested democratic politics. Morocco has and did have then an elected parliament, a liberal press, although not nearly as free and uninhibited as I found in Turkey and Pakistan. The politics are of a different order. The populace breaks down between the have-nots versus the five percent elite that have thrown in their lot with the king. So far, the have-nots have not challenged the elite. Basically the system takes care of everybody; no one starves. In parliamentary debates there were minor differences with the king about his policy vis-a-vis Israel and other Middle East questions. But debates on domestic issues, such as the state budget, were pretty tame. The big foreign policy issue for Morocco was the Western Sahara and Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara which had been evacuated by Spain much earlier and which Morocco was trying to settle on its own terms. That is, through a UN sponsored referendum that would have no risk of voting in favor of independence rather than union with Morocco. This had been challenged during my time there by Algeria and the Saharan Polisario Front which was attacking Moroccan positions in the Western Sahara. Western Sahara is a fairly large strip of land south of Morocco proper which contains mineral deposits, primarily phosphates.

Q: What was our position on the Western Sahara issue?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Our position was that we would like to see the problem settled by a United Nations sponsored referendum.

Q: Did the Moroccans like that idea?

SCHIFFERDECKER: King Hassan had agreed in the early '80s to a referendum, however, the dispute was always over who would be registered to vote. Morocco claimed, of course, that many Saharans had left there for economic reasons for Morocco proper for jobs and

whatnot and should be allowed to return to exercise their right to vote. The opposition, and the Algerian sponsored Polisario Front felt that Morocco should not be able to register these large numbers of alleged Saharans to vote in a referendum. That dispute is still outstanding.

Q: What about relations with Algeria?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That was another concern of ours. We wanted to see Algeria and Morocco talk to each other. When I arrived they were not doing much talking to each other about their bilateral problems and about the Western Sahara dispute. There were tensions from time to time. But there were proposed regional projects such as a gas pipeline from Algeria that would go to Morocco. Morocco, not having a lot of oil or gas deposits, could benefit by this. The pipeline would go through Morocco in the north and Morocco, of course, could obtain supplies from that pipeline. The pipeline would then transit the Strait of Gibraltar and go via Spain into Europe. This project is one of those dreams that may take many, many years to realize, if ever.

Q: It is natural gas we are talking about?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Primarily, at least for now we are talking about natural gas.

Q: Did the United States have any other economic interests in Morocco?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We did not have a large stake in the economic field either through investment or through trade. We have, as I mentioned, a small development assistance program.

Morocco, not having gas or oil, has turned to agriculture as its main export income earner. Citrus and agricultural products, and cut flowers, which provide a significant amount of income for Morocco, are exported to the European market. Other agricultural products,

such as fresh vegetables, which are produced in Morocco during the winter in Europe have also found a niche in that market.

The other major foreign exchange earner had been phosphates, but the market for phosphates dropped considerably because Morocco tried to raise the prices too high and it didn't work because there were other sources, namely in Jordan, to fill the gap at a more reasonable price. So, that policy backfired on Morocco and the industry was struggling during the time I was there.

Q: How did Morocco fit in with the rest of Africa? I'm thinking sub-Sahara. Any relationships at all?

SCHIFFERDECKER: King Hassan prided himself on developing relations with many sub-Saharan African leaders, including his immediate neighbor to the south, Mauritania. Over many hundreds of years considerable trade and cultural relationships had existed between Black Africa and Arab and Berber Morocco. King Hassan promoted these relationships vigorously. He has also cultivated relations with most of Francophone Africa, including Ivory Coast, Senegal and Zaire and several other countries that have given Morocco a modest role in trying to promote peace and development in Africa.

Q: So, Morocco plays a positive role?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, Morocco provides modest economic assistance to some countries of both Saharan and sub-Saharan Africa. I am thinking here of Mauritania, of Chad. Morocco has also flirted with Libya and we were always concerned that those relationships be confined to the bare minimum. Morocco, in an effort to gain support of its position on the Western Sahara, has tried to assist some of those smaller Francophone African countries in development projects. These are modest projects, as Morocco doesn't have a lot of resources to play a large role.

Q: What are Morocco's relationship with France?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Generally good but sometime uneasy over perceived slights. For example, Morocco had some problems with France over the treatment of North African immigrants, Moroccan immigrants in France. There have been, from time to time, feelings by Morocco that the French cultural penetration was overly strong or not to the benefit of Morocco. But, those problems were more of the nature of perceived slights than they were serious bilateral issues. I would say the most serious problem was dealing with the Moroccan immigrants and France trying to curb illegal immigration from North Africa much as we have tried to curb illegal immigration from Mexico.

Q: Do the Moroccans try to play off the United States against France? I wondered if there was any tension there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Not that one would notice or make too much of. During my time Moroccans seemed to be turning more to the United States for education. More Moroccans seemed to be learning English and wanting to be educated in the United States, whereas prior to that most Moroccans got their higher education in France. So, there seemed to be a tilt in the direction of the United States, but not one that we consciously exploited at the expense of France.

Q: Any other reflections on Morocco?

SCHIFFERDECKER: One of the problems that Morocco is going to have to face is the succession problem. Whenever you have a traditional monarchy and a very tight rein on government and the levers of power, questions will arise as to the fitness of the designated successor, in this case the crown prince. Many educated Moroccans and even those with a very modest amount of education, feel that a monarchy is really outdated at the end of the 20th century and believe that there should be perhaps a constitutional monarchy, a reigning monarchy rather than a ruling monarchy.

Q: Do you think there is any possibility of that happening?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes, and I think there is always the potential for instability to rear its head in Morocco. There were incidents, from time to time, of students or unemployed workers from the rural areas. There was a major riot in Fez while I was there and just recently there was a riot in Tangier according to a press report. So, there is a considerable undercurrent of tension and potential for violence, especially if there is a succession situation in Morocco that could cause a terrific amount of instability.

Q: How old is the king?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The king is in his late '60s now, I believe.

Q: And the crown prince?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The crown prince is in his early '30s. Many view the crown prince as not suited to succeed King Hassan.

Q: Who would be rivals?

SCHIFFERDECKER: His brother or one of the cousins some view as a more viable successor to King Hassan.

Q: Do they follow strict primogeniture?

SCHIFFERDECKER: In this case the crown prince is the eldest son. It is designated in the constitution that he will succeed his father. Morocco is a constitutional monarchy. However an amendment could be made by a compliant legislature if need be. And, there could be rivals who are not members of the royal family, of course.

Q: Okay, that brings us to the end of Morocco and you are about to return to the United States.

Q: Today is June 24, 1996 and this is the interviewer, Edward Dillery, and the subject of the interview is Arnold Schifferdecker. When we stopped last time you were returning to the United States after a tour in Rabat. Your next assignment was in OES. What does OES stand for?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Oceans, Environment and Science. Actually I did a tour in the Board of Examiners, a short one, then I went to the Bureau of Oceans, Environment and Scientific Affairs to be the director for environmental policy in that bureau.

Q: You went back to the Board of Examiners later, so we will cover that all in one segment. Tell us a little bit about what you did in OES? You had worked on environment before, of course.

SCHIFFERDECKER: I had done an out of agency tour at the Environmental Protection Agency back in the late '70s, a two year stint working primarily on issues with Canada and Mexico. This time I was given the directorship of the office of environmental policy which included a lot of issues, primarily international pollution control issues which included again Canada and Mexico, but also other issues such as acid rain issues with the United States and Europe and the problem of ozone layer depletion. Also, when I came into that assignment we were preparing for the big United Nations conference on environment and development in Rio which occurred in 1992.

Primarily, we dealt with issues that were of global environmental concern, in some cases local as well. A good example would be the implementation of the Montreal Protocol which is designed and was agreed a few years prior to my coming on the scene. The Montreal Protocol is anti-chlorofluorocarbons which are chemical compounds of various kinds that deplete the stratosphere of ozone and allow more ultraviolet radiation to strike the earth.

Q: You are the guy who is messing up the car air conditioning.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right. During our time and while I was in that job, this was during the Bush Administration and it was this administration that agreed to tightening up controls on CFC admissions and required we phase out the old style of air conditioning all over the world, including automobiles in the United States, as well as refrigeration and air conditioning all over the country. These measures to protect the ozone layer and promote the use of more environment friendly compounds that do the same job, these commitments that we undertook under the Montreal Protocol, were phased in over time. In fact, some of the commitments are yet to be achieved. New cars, for example, now have to have ozone layer friendly air conditioning units, whereas just a few years ago they used the old conventional Freon which depleted ozone when it escaped into the atmosphere.

Q: Taking a case like that, what did your office actually do? Did you write the papers that would be used in the conference, or were you more of a coordinator?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We coordinated the interagency positions which involved the Environmental Protection Agency, first of all, but many others. And, of course, the White House was very interested in environmental issues and had to sign off on positions that we took for conferences of the parties to the Montreal Protocol, for example. There were other agreements also that we worked on, some of which we were not yet a party to but where we participated in the conferences because commitments were being made that we wanted to monitor or be involved in to make sure that commitments were not taken which would cause us to not become a signatory later. One of these was the Basel Convention on the transportation of waste products, of garbage, of toxic substances, some of which can be recycled. Some countries are involved in accepting toxic wastes from other countries and reclaiming some of the metals or chemical compounds. For example, silver in some industrial waste byproducts would be toxic if discharged or put into a landfill untreated. This toxic garbage is exported to Switzerland and the Swiss have a process whereby they recover certain precious metals from the waste before they totally destroy it. This convention set up a control regime whereby these wastes were handled safely and

under certain rules of the road, so to speak, including shipping by ocean transport, and other arrangements for their reclamation and disposal. The Convention also protects poor countries, developing countries, from unscrupulous international operators selling them a bill of goods and paying someone to take toxic wastes off their hands and disposing them in unsafe ways and inflicting damage on their own citizens.

Q: How did the convention police this?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Most of the mechanism required national means to carry them out, of course.

Q: There was no international agency?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No. Well, there was a small secretariat for the convention but it could not police these agreements because it didn't have the staffing and most countries didn't want to pay for another huge bureaucracy. Much of the implementation arrangements for many environmental treaties require individual countries to police themselves. But, given that we have a free press in most parts of the world, if a country is not carrying out its obligations under a particular agreement, the word gets out very rapidly, especially if the United States is involved. As you know our free press is very vigilant and learns about most egregious cases, especially threats to the environment.

I want to emphasize that we did not sign the Basel Convention on the transportation of hazardous waste because the Congress refused to enact the implementing legislation we needed in order to be able to sign this convention and to my knowledge we still have not signed it because there are many disputes in the United States over how we regulate our own wastes, how we transport wastes between and among the 50 states of the United States. So, until those issues are settled, Congress is not likely to give us the implementing legislation that we need to sign on to this convention. Even though we still carry out the obligations under that convention, we are not a signatory.

Q: This smells greatly of domestic politics and affected industries. Were you affected by any of that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Oh yes. In fact we were mandated by various executive orders or directions from Congress through the Environmental Protection Agency to consult with affected industries on any international agreement before we signed it. In fact, many of the industrial groups in the United States sent NGO type representatives to these meetings before, during and after negotiations. So, they were part and parcel of international commitments that we undertake. These are big, awkward negotiating sessions, with national governments, industry groups and all ranges of NGOs such as Green Peace, hovering in the corridors and taking part in plenary debates.

Q: Did the Congress let you know they were not going to pass legislation and urge us not to partake of these conventions? If so, who were the main players in Congress on this?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Sometimes we got mixed signals from Congress, from either the Democratic or Republic leadership at that time. Congressman Dingell was one who paid a great deal of attention to the commitments we undertook with Canada on acid rain because it affected a lot of coal fired power plants, automobile plants in states in the Ohio Valley, Michigan and all the border states with Canada. So before we signed the agreement with Canada to reduce emissions of precursors to acid rain, i.e. sulfurous coal, we had to consult with almost all of the affected states and members of congress before any agreement was signed. And that was done religiously.

Q: How about the environmentally friendly organizations, what role did they play?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They pushed us from the other side, the opposite side from industry. In many ways they supported stronger language in agreements such as in the Montreal Protocol. They favored earlier phaseout dates for various CFC components and compounds from industry. But, we, in a way, in the State Department were required to

with the help of Congress and, of course, the executive branch, the President, to balance off the competing interests, the environmentalists versus the industrial people. It affected business concerns, and, of course, that was a legitimate concern too affecting the bottom line of many industries.

Q: You mentioned earlier when you were working in IO you were working on similar kinds of activities and most of the things you mentioned working on in OES have also had some sort of United Nations connection, not all but a good part of it. What was the differences between what the two bureau did and why do we need both offices?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The International Organizations Bureau of the State Department works with all organizations that deal multilaterally, including primarily the United Nations as well as other international organizations, some regional in nature. The OES Bureau is involved primarily with organizations such as UN Environmental Program, the Economic Commission for Europe and other organizations, including the OSCE, that are concerned with environmental issues, not necessarily all of them being subsidiaries of the United Nations. Also, the OES Bureau is charged with implementing many international agreements that are only agreements among parties, they don't necessarily involve the United Nations Environment Program.

Q: What were the relations between offices in IO and OES that worked on the same issues?

SCHIFFERDECKER: OES had the main staff that dealt with environmental issues and if it involved the United Nations we worked with the IO Bureau to make sure they were conversant with what we were doing. They attended some of our interagency meetings which forged the US position for various conferences and negotiations. If it involved the United Nations in Geneva or UN Environmental Program in Nairobi, IO had representatives at these meetings.

Q: What about the UN Environmental Program, is it a useful activity?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It has a mixed record so far. I don't recall exactly when UNEP was created, I believe about the same time that our own national Environmental Protection Agency was created and such agencies were created in other countries. Its leadership was not always the strongest. It didn't always command sufficient budget to be able to staff ambitious UN programs. Other agencies that dealt with development such as Food and Agricultural Organization, UN Development Program, had bigger budgets and were able to call the shots on international development. The problem became such that several international conferences under the United Nations were held, the last one being the one I referred to earlier, the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio. At that meeting the United Nations developers and environmentalists tried to bring their two programs together so that development proceeded in a sustainable manner, or was not destructive to the environment. Now sustainable development, of course, is still to be realized but at least it was a stab and start in the direction of understanding that if you build a large irrigation project you must account for the environmental consequences. In brief, the Rio Conference called on all countries to take account of the existing ecosystem before disturbing or changing it for the economic benefit of its people.

The UN Environment Program also has a role in helping to implement international agreements. They provide the secretariats for a number of agreements such as the Montreal Protocol. So, they do perform a useful function. The problem in Nairobi is that the communications are bad, it's distant from where much of the work and negotiation is taking place on the environment. So, UNEP has a large subsidiary organization located in Geneva, which is much more convenient because many of our meetings are held in Geneva, Europe or North America.

Q: So, the establishment of UNEP in Nairobi was partly to satisfy African demands for more activity in Africa.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right.

Q: How did the White House get involved in environmental affairs? Is the EPA seen as part of the White House or did they have a separate entity that handled such affairs? Who actually chaired the meetings when you were getting ready to come up with the final US government policy on issues?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The State Department always insisted that State Department people chair interagency meetings on international environmental policy. The White House had a domestic policy council and also had a special office that looked at environmental regulations that were being promulgated either by EPA or other agencies that have regulatory functions for domestic environmental legislation. Those activities took place separate from our meetings where we were preparing for various international meetings.

One of the big new activities that we were taking part in in my bureau was the international climate change negotiations that were being hammered out and are still under discussion, which have far reaching consequences, of course, for US industry. Now that was a separate office from mine because the issues were so large and complex a separate office had been created when I arrived in the OES Bureau. The officers dealing with climate issues had to be very closely plugged into the White House decision making people because of the large economic implications if you have to cut CO2 emissions, carbon dioxide emissions. That affects our heating, air conditioning and just about every activity involving combustion of gas or oil or other fossil fuel. So, the Department of Energy was concerned. People in the Department of Commerce to deal with atmosphere, NOAA, were involved in scientific research and verifying whether global warming is or isn't a problem. So, there was an international negotiation as well as a domestic negotiation going on as to what we really thought the dimensions of the problem were. The White House was vitally interested in those issues and was probably more interested in those issues than in the issues that I dealt with, that is, more conventional environmental protection issues.

Q: When we had a delegation to the meeting to work on these conventions, who would actually head the delegation?

SCHIFFERDECKER: A deputy assistant secretary, or the assistant secretary himself or herself, or myself, as office director. I headed some delegations at international meetings but by no means all because the front office of OES had a DAS for each set of issues. One that dealt with oceans, one that dealt with climate almost exclusively, and one that dealt with other environmental issues. So, depending on whether they were preoccupied somewhere else, or were primarily concerned with the issue that I was dealing with, they would head the delegation. Or, in the case of the UN Environment Development conference in Rio, the head of the delegation was the President, himself.

Q: Who were your deputy assistant secretaries and your assistant secretaries during your time there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The assistant secretary was Buff Bohlen during the first part of my tour, then Elinor Constable came in towards the end of my two year stint. The deputy assistant secretary that I worked with was a political appointee, Bob Reinstein, who had long been in the Department of Energy and other federal jobs before coming over to State.

Q: Any other thoughts on that assignment in OES? Let me ask you a general question about that. What is your sense of the value of that bureau for the United States as a whole and the Department in particular? Given its dichotomy of trying to be an expert on the issues and trying to coordinate the international aspects of it, it seems like sometimes you almost fall in between the two with some people knowing more about the specifics of an issue and others who are better placed to work on the international aspects, particularly in bilateral cases. What is your response to that line of thinking?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Overall, the work of OES I think is very important and it is important that the United States continue to play a leadership role so that we not only help to

reduce global pollution, but also to insure that the commitments undertaken under various agreements are realistic and achievable. I think the State Department has played and should continue to play a strong leadership role.

As you might suspect, a number of the people assigned to OES are civil servants, not necessarily FSOs, the balance is about 50-50 I believe, which is a much higher percentage of GS to FS people than in most bureaus. That is probably for a good reason as well. You need more continuity in dealing with many of these technical issues and you need some people with technical backgrounds. Although, I would argue that FSO generalists also can do a good job of steering the issues and of having the right feel for the international environment and also in dealing with other agencies. Many of the players in the interagency environment were generalists as well, not necessarily technical people. You need to understand the basic technical issues, but you don't need to have a detailed grasp of all technical aspects to be able to deal with such issues. You can borrow technical experts from other agencies.

Q: What were your counterparts like in other countries? Did they have similar organizations to ours or did you find that they have more continuity?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They tended to have a combination also of foreign office people and environmental protection agency people. They seemed to have more of the EPA types at meetings than we did, perhaps, at least heading the delegation. That has been a problem or an issue that we have been dealing with in OES, that is EPA and to some extent some of the other agencies would like to be able to chair international meetings that deal with issues that they legally are responsible for under domestic US law. However, State has argued just as strongly that it is necessary for the State Department, which is not a technical agency as concerns the environment, to deal with issues fairly in the interagency context and to be an honest broker, as I used to put it in many interagency meetings, among competing interests and to find out where the balance should be and then convey that in international negotiations or conferences.

Q: Any other final thoughts on OES? I guess that was your last official exposure to the environment as such.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right. I felt that my earlier tour in EPA had given me some good credentials. I was familiar with many of the issues, they don't change that rapidly, although global warming was an issue that was fairly new when I came back to the environment in OES. The EPA experience at least had given me a leg up in getting into the issues fairly quickly after I arrived, and going off to meetings and chairing interagency meetings fairly soon after I entered on duty.

Q: When you left OES, when was that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was 1993.

Q: Then you went to the Board of Examiners for a second stint. How long were you there the first time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: A little over a year the first time before OES. In that job I was the deputy staff director to Marshall Casse, who was the staff director. We were just redoing the Foreign Service exam after a major law suit in which the Department of State agreed that the exam through a purely statistical analysis seemed to be discriminatory against women—the written exam not the oral exam. The oral exam was what the Board of Examiners administers. The written exam is developed on the outside by contractor, in this case, the Educational Testing Service in Princeton. However, the monitoring of it and the fairness of it and the questions that were used on the exam had to be vetted through the Board of Examiners to make sure that the questions were reflective of our need for well-rounded Foreign Service officer candidates and also that were not discriminatory in any way. I argued, after looking at this whole thing, that the test, itself, was not discriminatory against women or minorities, but that the fact that the pass rates for this exam were not completely reflective of groups of takers, that is the percentage of white males or

females or minority passers were not equal. My argument was that these results were a reflection of what people had studied and were interested in in college, etc., although we couldn't statistically prove this and the State Department did not try to prove it in court. The Department did agree to try and take another look at the exam and try to make it as unbiased as it could possibly be.

Q: Was that effort completed while you were still there the first time?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It was, although the exam was again challenged after my departure by the same women's class action suit that had won remedial action earlier, that is the Alison Palmer group. The new exam was based on a thorough job analysis of what Foreign Service officers did and what they needed to know before they came into the Service and what they could learn on the job and therefore didn't need to be tested for such as languages or country specific material. The new exam, therefore, was based on what Foreign Service officers, who had already been in the Service for a number of years said was necessary to know when they came in and could not be learned easily on the job.

Q: How did you find that out?

SCHIFFERDECKER: By doing a very thorough questionnaire of second and third tour officers, people who had been in less than ten years, consular, political, economic and admin officers. So, the new exam seemed to reflect fairly well what these persons told us they needed to know and was not in any way biased toward any particular group.

Q: But, if that group you questioned was biased toward another group wouldn't that be a second generation of bias?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, we took pains to make sure the analysis was a big enough cross section of Foreign Service people that included all of the relevant groups.

Q: What kind of changes were made?

SCHIFFERDECKER: There were fewer questions on specific country information, fewer trivial pursuit type of questions which wouldn't necessarily prove that you would be a good Foreign Service officer if you happened to know them.

Q: I remember on my exam a question was how many home runs did Babe Ruth hit in 1930?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I don't think I would have gotten that.

Q: Sixty.

SCHIFFERDECKER: What was put into the exam was more on the United States, on US history, constitution, culture, because the job analysis discovered that Foreign Service officers said we represent the United States of America and therefore should know more about our own country. We can learn a lot of other stuff about country X and country Y by area studies at FSI after we come in or self study. So, this was felt to be quite a major change in the emphasis in the exam. Although, there were many questions maintained on different parts of the world so that people could show their knowledge of geography and world history and to some extent, recent international politics. But, there was a little less stress in these areas than formerly.

Q: Were you there long enough to see the results of one of the new exams?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Oh yes. The results were a little bit closer to being reflective of the various groups that took the exam; however, they never really completely resulted in pass rates where the percentage of passers was equal across all groups.

Q: The argument of the suit against the Department was that of the number of people who take the exam, the proportion that pass should be the same as the proportion of the various groups taking the exam.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Or within one standard deviation.

Q: And they didn't quite make that.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right. So they are talking now, I understand, of throwing out the written exam. I have strong reservations against it, that is my bias.

Q: Why is that?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I feel a written exam is not the end-all and be-all of what makes a good Foreign Service officer, but the results should show that people have been interested in the issues that Foreign Service work comprises and the results should also be looked at as simply a screening device. The oral exam is where you evaluate the in-depth knowledge and personal characteristics of Foreign Service officers, and that is why the oral exam is equally if not more important than the written exam. The written exam is merely a ticket to the oral exam. But, you should be able to get that ticket through some legitimate display of a breadth of knowledge of world affairs, as well as of the United States.

Q: I take it that one of the problems is that more people deserve a ticket to the orals than can be accommodated? What are the restrictions on the number of people who can take the oral examination?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The restrictions are basically how many people can you run through in one given year and how much staff do you have available to administer that exam in a completely fair and unbiased way. In theory there is no restriction on the number you can test in the oral exam. In fact, the first year I was there after the new exam, there was a larger population to the oral exam than there had been in previous years. I don't know if that still holds now because as you know we did not give the exam in 1995 because the intake had dropped off so much and we had a large number of people on the register who had very little chance of getting an appointment. So, it was felt that in 1995 the written

exam and oral exam should not be given, the whole cycle, was missed. But, I am glad to see that the written exam is going to be given again in 1996 and there will be an oral assessment following that.

Q: I understand that the proposal, although it is not clear, means that there would be a pilot program of no written examination, but some system based on written qualifications like acceptance to grad school or something like that.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Or experience maybe in some cases. Well, that should be tried I think. I wouldn't say it is invalid as a way of screening applicants.

Q: Well, it seemed to me that the written examination was one of the important rites of passage. That it was coming in the old fashioned way. Although, I have to confess that even as far back as I can remember some of the most successful people in the Foreign Service have not been those who came in by way of the written examination.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Although there aren't very many who fall in that category, who became career Foreign Service officers.

Q: Well, to name some, Reg Bartholomew, Tony Gillespie, Michael Armacost. There have been some pretty famous people who did not take the exam. Now, part of that was a result of Wriston when they brought a lot of civil servant into the Foreign Service. To me the great advantage of the written examination is that it makes entrance to the Foreign Service feasible for everyone in America.

SCHIFFERDECKER: It's very democratic.

Q: Yes, and even though I think an interest in foreign affairs is vital for passing it and being successful, if we were to begin to recruit on the basis of the best degrees in international affairs or from schools of the Foreign Service and that sort of thing, there again you would limit your intake to a certain kind of person.

Okay, let's move to the oral. What were your impressions of that? Is it a good system? Does it produce the people we want?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think it is a good system. It is very thorough. When you and I took the orals, I think mine lasted a couple of hours, perhaps, at least part of an afternoon. Now it is all day. They come in very early in the morning and have to do two written products, display negotiating skills...it is not a one-on-one or two-on-one type of interview Q&A any more as it used to be. Now it is much more going through exercises that are designed to show skills that a Foreign Service officer should have, needs to have, in order to be successful. These have evolved over a number of years.

There was a fairly big change during my time and that was to have a candidate do a brand new role playing exercise. The first task was to read a large volume of materials including a cable of instructions from Washington, the candidate playing a political or economic or admin or consular officer overseas. Then, after an hour of study of the material the candidate delivered a demarche before two examiners who played the role of foreign ministry officials or other ministry officials of a host government. We called it the demarche exercise. The candidate had to be quick thinking, persuasive, articulate, and exhibit the many qualities we expect a person to have when they are doing this actual work overseas. The two examiners playing the role of foreign officials tended to challenge very severely the basis for the demarche and particulars so that the candidate then had to display, as I say, quick thinking, capability to marshal arguments, to counter doubts cast on the whole exercise by the foreign officials. So, we thought it was a very realistic exercise.

After the demarche exercise was completed, the candidate would have to compose a telegram back to Washington, telling the Department the results of the demarche that was made to foreign officials. Here we tested not only writing skills and whether the candidate was accurately reporting the results of the demarche, testing a little bit his other integrity and whether they shaded or didn't shade the result. It was amazing the different kind of approaches taken by some candidates. Some glossed over or completely omitted

parts where the demarche was not very successful, and that was always judged to be misleading and graded down. So, you could test many characteristics of a candidate from one simple exercise, and there were other exercises as well.

Q: How long did that one last?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That lasted one hour for preparation, one hour for actual doing and one hour for writing up the demarche results. So, it took three hours.

Q: What were some of the other exercises?

SCHIFFERDECKER: One of the other more time honored elements of the oral exam is a group exercise where all four, five or six candidates, however many we have for a particular group, get together to comprise an embassy task force. Each one is given a community development project that is to be funded by the ambassador's discretionary fund. The element of competition comes out in these exercises and the Examiners are able to judge the way candidates interact with each other much as they would in a country team setting or any kind of group meeting that they would have in a mission or in the Department. Here the candidates must first study their project and master the details. Then after about a half hour of preparation the Examiners enter the room and the candidate gives a briefing about his or her project, its good points and its bad points (each project contains strong points and drawbacks) so the Examiners are able to judge how accurately these are portrayed and whether they are portrayed fairly. Then, after each candidate displays their briefing skills and how well they depict their project they are given a limited amount of funds and there are not enough funds, of course, for funding all the projects, so they have to negotiate among themselves as to which project or projects should be funded and at what level. This makes for a very interesting hour of interaction among the candidates. Then the candidates are asked to leave and get a cup of coffee while the day's results then are weighed.

Another part of the exercise that they had done previously was an essay on a topic of their choice. They select one of five or six topics and write an essay.

Q: Do they do that while they are there?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They usually do that before lunch hour.

Q: How long does the group exercise take?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It takes an hour and a half to two hours.

Q: So, so far we have used up 4 and a half hours. The essay would be another hour bringing it to 5 and a half hours. How much more is involved?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They have some breaks in between and we do allow them to go to lunch.

Q: I see. But those two are the two major exercises or are there others as well?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Those are the major two and the written exercise I mentioned. They have added some other elements to the oral exam and I am not completely up to date, so I probably don't need to go into those because some of them may have been dropped.

Q: But those two were the most important elements?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes. You will notice in these exercises we weren't looking for particular knowledge that the candidate brought with him or her. They were only asked to display certain skills of being able to depict things accurately, to be persuasive. Its their personal characteristics that we were looking at for the most part during the oral exam and not knowledge. The oral used to be composed of a lot of questions and answers about their depth of knowledge on a particular economic or political issues or international issue.

That we do not test for again because that is either covered in the written exam or they can learn it on the job and don't need to bring it with them.

Q: What happens after the whole thing is over?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Then there is a period of evaluation of the results. The candidates have to achieve a cutoff score on the day's exercises that would continue their candidacy into the security background check and eventually, if they pass that, their name would go on the register. We also give exit interviews to those candidates who were unsuccessful and let them know that we appreciated their interest, sorry we are not taking many in and although you did well your score wasn't high enough to merit continuation of your candidacy. We also give what we called a personal interview lasting one hour for successful candidates.

Q: Is that part of that same day?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Yes. They are there until five and sometimes six o'clock in the evening. That interview is deemed to be an important part of the process because there are a number of candidates who know very little about the Foreign Service and this gives them a chance to ask questions about what they are getting into and gives the Examiners one more chance to see the candidate under more relaxed circumstances where they can be evaluated yet again as to whether they would be suitable...

Q: After telling them they have been successful you might change your mind?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We tell them that they were successful up to the point of the personal interview. There have been very few cases where a candidate was washed out after the personal interview, because either it was found that the candidate had very unrealistic expectations of the Foreign Service or the candidate, himself or herself, realized that “this really isn't for me” or “I was taking the exam because I knew it was challenging and wanted to see if I could pass it.” That has happened a few times as well.

Q: But you make that determination on the very day that they go through this?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right.

Q: How do you do that? What if you wanted to take all six of them?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, it has happened a few times. If all six pass the oral then they have to line up for personal interviews and sometimes it can go late into the evening.

Q: You can't take everybody. Suppose you took six on Monday and got down to the next Monday and six more passed?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It doesn't happen that often. The cutoff score is established to control the flow.

Q: So you could have a case where nobody out of the six would pass?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That is right and the pass rate tended to be from around 11 to 14 percent of those who took the oral. Not a very high pass rate.

Q: How are the Examiners trained?

SCHIFFERDECKER: They are trained about the time the written exam is given before the oral begins usually in January. There is an intensive training period of about a week or ten days and some practice exams are given before the new crop of written exam passers come to the oral. There have been at times up to 20-25 Examiners in B/EX who have administered the oral exam for the first six months of the year. Many Examiners come for a short period of time—six months, eight months, one year—and they almost universally state that they thought it was a very important function, demanding job, an interesting experience, and that they were proud to have worked to find the best and the brightest that we want to have in the Foreign Service.

Q: Many of them say that, what do you say?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I say the same thing.

Q: The first year at B/EX you were deputy director of the staff, what were you doing the second year?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The second time I came just as an Examiner to finish out my career. I did spend three months in New York at the General Assembly as area advisor for South Asia in 1994 before I retired in 1995.

Q: What is an area advisor? What do they do and where do they do it and how do they do it?

SCHIFFERDECKER: During the UN General Assembly there are so many issues dealt with during that intensive period of three to three and a half months in New York that the staff at the US Mission in New York is really overwhelmed and unable to deal with all of the issues by themselves. So, each geographic bureau has traditionally sent someone to be the area advisor and to deal with many of those issues that come up in the General Assembly. That is what I did.

Q: One from each bureau?

SCHIFFERDECKER: That's right, one person. We either live in New York or commute back to Washington on weekends. I did this now both in my last official assignment before retiring and also after I retired I was reappointed and asked to do that again in 1995 and again in 1996.

Q: What is a day in the life of an advisor like?

SCHIFFERDECKER: First of all we begin by reading our e-mail just as any desk officer or officer director might in Washington because there is a lot of diplomacy going on prior to

the General Assembly. Next, we have to be in touch with our people in Washington either by phone or by e-mail or fax. We are sending them documents, draft resolutions, that sort of thing from New York and they are reacting and getting instructions back to us. Normally instructions have to come by official State Department cable; however, sometimes we need to have reactions faster than instruction cables can be cleared in Washington, so we are on the phone and sometimes on classified fax machines or classified e-mail in order to get the information we need. The meetings in the General Assembly begin around 10 or 10:30 every morning and that doesn't give much time for the offices in Washington to give instructions, or reactions or guidance.

The meetings last all day. There are either plenary meetings of the General Assembly in the Great Hall or more likely committee sessions and sometimes small negotiating groups that are acting on behalf of one of the committees.

Q: When you say your people, who are your people in Washington?

SCHIFFERDECKER: In my case, within the South Asia Bureau it would be the assistant secretary, her deputy or one of the office directors. It is a small bureau and has only three office directors. Or a country desk officer if the issue concerns a specific country. One of the issues I worked on a lot was Afghanistan so I was in touch a lot with the Afghan desk officers, there were two of them, and with the country director at that time, Mr. Coldren. Also, the assistant secretary, Robin Raphel, came to New York for bilateral meetings during the early phases of the General Assembly and a couple of times afterwards to talk to either individual heads of delegation foreign ministers or UN secretariat officials. So, I was always kept busy when Robin came to New York attending meetings with her and reporting the results of those meetings just like a USUN officer might be expected to do.

Q: When you say that, was there any friction between you and South Asia and IO and/or between you and the regular political or economic section of USUN?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, in fact, the area advisors were normally doubling up in offices. The office space is not that generous in USUN so as a result we normally sat in the same office as the USUN officer who handled that issue in normal times when there wasn't a General Assembly. So, we were on the same wave length with the mission at all times.

There were very few conflicts or problems of coordination with the IO bureau or with the bureau we represented, in my case South Asia. I seldom had problems. There were problems of coordination from time to time, making sure everyone was on the same music sheet, but seldom any coordination issues for me in New York.

Q: What were your relationships with your other area counterparts?

SCHIFFERDECKER: We dealt with them just as though we were a mission officer, temporarily assigned. We dealt with their ambassador, deputy ambassador or counselors or whoever we needed to deal with on issues.

Perhaps one way to understand it better would be for me to give you an example of dealing with the issue of Afghanistan. The UN had a special mission on Afghanistan headed by a special appointee, a Tunisian named Ambassador Mestiri, who was in the region, most of the time in Islamabad, trying to negotiate the end to the factional fighting in Afghanistan. Each year the General Assembly draws up a resolution which comprises this special representative's negotiating instructions. It wasn't a very easy thing to do because there were conflicts among the neighboring powers, Iran, Pakistan, India, Russia and the “stans” (Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan) plus the United States, Egypt, Turkey and a few other players. So, what I did was to set up an ad hoc resolution negotiating committee and persuaded the Germans to chair it because we felt they would be seen as more of a neutral country. During the General Assembly we met off site usually at the German mission, and over a period of a month or two negotiated an acceptable resolution. But, it took a lot of time and to get the right policy words into the resolution I needed to coordinate almost on a daily basis with the bureau in Washington.

Q: Having been to two General Assemblies, what is your general impression as a whole and its usefulness?

SCHIFFERDECKER: It is very hard to characterize a huge body like the United Nations, which has so many facets to it. For example, the Security Council is the body that the United States pays most attention to because its resolutions are mandatory if they are passed and not vetoed and it deals with the most sensitive security issues, of course, the political issues of the world. Sometimes the United States and other countries choose to bypass the UN, but when we don't and when we expect the UN to be the nexus for our policy, it becomes a very important function—passing Security Council resolutions.

Of course they are not always effective. For example, take the United Nations' role in Bosnia, as defined by a number of Security Council resolutions, countless resolutions. The record of the United Nations in Bosnia was poor because the Security Council resolutions were the product of too many unworkable compromises. As you know we have the Dayton Peace Accords and NATO/IFOR implementation process going on now.

So, the United Nations is important only as individual countries, particularly the permanent members, give it importance. Otherwise it can be ignored, neglected, pilloried. It can be a convenient scapegoat at times for various countries.

Look at the issue of Iraq and the Gulf War. Although much of the Gulf War participation was negotiated by the United States, by Secretary of State Baker, the actual war, itself, the action was authorized by the United Nations, by the Security Council. The aftermath of the war was very carefully orchestrated through the United Nations and the regime of sanctions that we have on the Saddam Hussein government in Baghdad were all passed by the Security Council by the unanimous wishes of the permanent members. So, it is a very important process that we have going on there.

There are many other examples where the UN has considerable importance. Where it is losing value, I think, is through the General Assembly. The resolutions there are not mandatory, they are advisory in nature. They have a certain moral force, especially when they are passed by consensus, but when there is a split vote of let's say 55-45 with 45-50 abstentions, you don't have very much moral force behind that resolution.

Q: How about our system of representation of United States interests in the United Nations? Do you like the organization and things like the fact of the special role given to the permanent representative and that sort of thing?

SCHIFFERDECKER: The US, I think currently is superbly represented at our UN Mission in New York by Madeleine Albright and her immediate deputy, Skip Gnehm. The role given to Ambassador Albright, as a member of the cabinet, I think is very crucial. It gives that person and the job of representing the United States in the world body special importance and it helps to keep us focused on the UN as a way of trying to resolve many problems, some of which do not necessarily go through the Security Council but are handled by other agencies and bodies of the UN. But, in the cases of major UN Security Council issues like Iraq or Bosnia, I think it is important that the UN representative in New York has cabinet status and maintains an office in the State Department with a small staff so that she can keep a base in Washington as well as New York and can coordinate our national security decisions working with State and the NSC. One of her deputies is frequently handling issues in New York. She is down here either in the White House or in the Department pursuing policy initiatives that she feels are important to our goals in the UN.

Q: We have concluded your formal time in the Foreign Service, however, you served in countries with widely and varying different brands of Islam and with the question of Islam in general being one of the larger issues of concern to the United States at this time, I wonder if you could tell us what your thoughts are on that subject? How were your different customers different and what is the significance and direction of Islam in general?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I think this is a very important issue because Americans tend to look at the Muslim world as kind of a monolithic force and frequently Muslims are viewed in negative terms in the United States. I would start out by staying that given all the countries that I have been in or observed or traveled in or been posted to in the Muslim world, Islam is definitely not a monolith, although frequently the United States looks at the Muslim world through the lens of one particular issue, that is the Arab/Israeli conflict. When we see militant or extremist violent reactions of Muslim fundamentalists to Israel or to some aspect of our policy on Israel, we tend to see them all colored with the same green shade, green being the color of the prophet and the reason why many Muslim flags are green. We tend to see the Islamic world as militant, as anti-Western, anti-Israel, and in many cases fanatic. But, that is not true at all. We deal very closely and on very friendly terms with a number of Muslim states. For example, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Pakistan, Malaysia, many of the Gulf countries. We are highly dependent on the Gulf for oil supplies. In fact, in practice we tend to deal with Islamic countries on a country by country basis and not as sort of a religious kind of force that we have to cope with.

Now, of course, we have to understand also that fundamentalist Islam is frequently not just religious in nature, it is aimed at political and social reform. There are many authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and citizens of those countries who feel repressed politically tend to behave in an exaggerated and sometimes egregious ways. So we should look at Islamic fundamentalism, perhaps as playing a role similar to the one Christianity played in medieval times in Europe, that is, sometimes there were waves of fanaticism and, of course, much of the leadership of the European countries was based on religious affiliation. In the Middle East we see the fanatics, such as those in Iran or in Libya or in the Sudan as the ones that exemplify the worst aspects of the fundamentalist religions body. But, in fact, there are many moderate regimes that we deal with and who deal with us not on the basis of any kind of religion or concern. Even now as peace is being made with Israel, we are entering into many more pragmatic relationships than we have had

before when the Arab-Israeli problem prevented us from having close relations with many countries of the Middle East.

Q: Could you in simple terms explain the differences in Islam in Afghanistan, Turkey and Morocco? What would be the similarities and what would be the differences?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Let me start with Turkey which is at one end of the spectrum. Turkey consciously made a decision to de-emphasize the role of Islam in society when the Republic of Turkey was created by Ataturk in 1923 and explicitly Turkey was made a constitutional, secular state. Even the Arabic script that Turkish had been written in was changed into Latin characters to emphasize Turkey's desire no longer to face East, but to face West. Over some 75 years that Turkey has been a secular non-Islamic republic, reactions have set in against this and we now have in Turkey a very strong religious party that is knocking on the doors of power and, in fact, nearly came to power but could not seem to get the nod to create its own government.

At the same time I would emphasize that this religious party in Turkey is knocking on the door to power through constitutional means and is by no means a party that would totally turn its back on modernization or many of the reforms that were made by Ataturk, although they would tend to be more sensitive to the religious nature of the country and the beliefs of the people. I do not believe that Turkey is headed for some sort of fundamentalist turnaround and negation of all that Ataturk has done for the country.

In Afghanistan, you have a much less developed country which did call itself an Islamic monarchy and then later a government and for a short time it was declared secular by a Communist regime, which was implanted but thrown out. The country, itself, is very pious and women are veiled. Although there was a period of time when I was there in the '70s, when not all the women were veiled and there was a very strong pro-Western bias to the monarchy. Afghanistan, I believe, has reverted back to its very strong emphasis on

religious observance, public display of piety, but overall, most Afghans tend to be fairly pragmatic in their observance of religion.

In Morocco, something akin to Jordan, the monarch traces his lineage back to the Prophet Muhammad and you have what you might call a state sanctioned religious regime. But, in Morocco, King Hassan espouses a very tolerant brand of Islam. He has always wanted to make peace with Israel and have relations with Israel. Moroccan Jews still live unmolested and practice their religion in Morocco in two major cities, Casablanca and Rabat, although most of the Moroccan Jews immigrated to Israel back in the '50s and early '60s.

The three regimes represent mostly a tolerant and moderate practice of the Islamic religion, except for recent backsliding into more extremist practices in Afghanistan.

Q: So, you don't see the Islamic bogeyman, so to speak, in panic terms?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, I would not. That is not to say there are not things that we should take seriously. One of them is international terrorism which is frequently in the Middle East done under the cloak of Islam or religion, when, in fact, it probably should be viewed more as political extremism rather than as some generalized threat to secularism or Christianity as it sometimes is viewed.

Q: In relation to that, is there a basic Islam belief in evangelism and proselytism? Would they like to have everyone be Islamic?

SCHIFFERDECKER: When I was in Pakistan there was a certain branch of the Sunnis who were advocating and practicing proselytization in foreign countries as well as in their own neighborhoods. But, for the most part, practitioners of Islam try and hold together what they have and do not proselytize the way Christians have by sending people to foreign countries. A certain amount of this is done, of course, but it is fairly low key.

Q: Not a large missionary effort?

SCHIFFERDECKER: No, not formal like in the Mormon sense of sending young people abroad.

Q: Or like some Catholics in the old days.

SCHIFFERDECKER: That is true.

Q: I realize that I left out Pakistan. How about Islam in Pakistan?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Well, there are so many strains of Islam in Pakistan that it is very hard to generalize; again we have no monolithic structure.

Q: It is more diverse than any of the others?

SCHIFFERDECKER: I would say yes. There are several schools of Sunni Islam practiced in parts of Pakistan. Some of it varies according to the particular province or ethnic group the people come from. There are about 15 percent who are Shia, some very pro-Iranian. There is a good deal of sectarian violence in Pakistan today, much of it Sunni vs Shia. There are some differences among the Shia as well. In fact, some of the Pakistanis that I dealt with were Shia leaders who were by no means pro-Iran or pro-Khomeini, who were respected businessmen and moved easily in international circles. One of my business contacts in Lahore was the Pakistani head of the World Wildlife Fund, a big international NGO located in Geneva. He was trying to help save one of the desert birds of Pakistan, the bustard, which was increasingly being hunted by Sheikhs from the Gulf who would come over with their falcons because they had already finished off their own populations of bustard in the Gulf and were beginning to do the same in Pakistan. This Pakistani Shia leader, Babar Ali Shah, was head of a big industrial concern and was trying to save this endangered species in Pakistan. A very moderate and modern person he was. So, in Pakistan you had Muslims killing Muslims in Karachi and you still have it. Some of it is more ethnic than it is religious but yet they attack each other in their mosques, they attack worshipers when they are coming out of their mosques. So violence is not always being

committed against foreigners or Westerners but sometimes it occurs among co-religionists in countries like Pakistan. I might add that one of the small sects of Islam in Pakistan, the Ismaili sect, is exceptionally moderate and tolerant.

Q: I guess of the four, Pakistan is the best demonstration of the fact that Islam is not monolithic.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Very definitely. Perhaps it more closely resembles early Christian sectarianism.

Q: Did that occur because of the fact that the old India was so big?

SCHIFFERDECKER: Part of it occurred when the Persian empire was expanded and ruled parts of what are now India and Pakistan, some of the people were converted or espoused Shiaism while others, who had been of the Sunni persuasion, remained so. And, part of it is due to this historical migrations of peoples between India and Pakistan before and after partition. Many Bangladeshi coming to West Pakistan after Bangladesh became independent. Stresses and strains between Kashmir and India produced quite a bit of Islamic fundamentalism in Kashmir which is now embroiled in a major guerrilla insurrection with Indian troops.

Q: Any other last thoughts? We have come to the end of our tape and it has been a great pleasure to interview you.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Thank you, I have enjoyed it. I have one additional thought on the Islamic front. I feel that we should not ignore fundamentalist Islam but by the same token our policy should try to cultivate and accommodate the moderate and tolerant strains and ideals of Islam, which do exist. We should remain strongly opposed, of course, to the violent and extremist manifestations of fanatic Islam as we see coming out of Libya, Sudan and to some extent Iran still.

Q: On that interesting note and policy advice, we will close the interview. This completes the interview of Arnold Schifferdecker. Today is June 24, 1996. Thank you very much.

SCHIFFERDECKER: Thank you.

End of interview